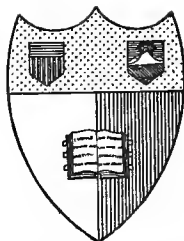




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A YEAR IN CHINA





THE YANGTZE KIANG RAPIDS.

[Frontispiece:

A YEAR IN CHINA

1899-1900

BY

CLIVE BIGHAM, C.M.G.

(Late Hon. Attaché to H.M. Legation in Peking)

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

London

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PREFACE

THIS book only purports to be a record of the personal experiences and impressions gained during nearly eighteen months' stay in the Far East. Part of this time was spent in travel, part in diplomacy, and part in fighting.

High questions of statecraft, strategy and finance have been avoided, nor has any attempt been made to discuss the recent or to advise the future policy of the British or any other Government. But it is a pleasure to remember the courage, competence and perseverance of those who work for this country in China.

It was the author's privilege to serve under both Sir Claude Macdonald and Sir Edward Seymour, and to experience great kindness from many consuls, naval officers, missionaries, and merchants, and also from several native officials. He takes this opportunity of thanking them most heartily for their hospitality and assistance, and of wishing them all prosperity and success in the future.

C. C. B.

LONDON,
March, 1901.

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A YEAR IN CHINA

CHAPTER I

CANTON TO HANKOW

EARLY in April 1899 I arrived in Hongkong after a rather lively run of five days from Singapore. My destination was the British Legation at Peking, to which I had been attached, and where I contemplated spending some time. It was three years since I had paid my first visit to China, and this had been limited to the Turki city of Kashgar, which lies at the extreme western verge of the Empire on the lower slopes of the Pamir Plateau, and contains only a limited number of Chinese mandarins and a small garrison of soldiers. My modest knowledge of the Celestials, of their country and their customs, was therefore mainly derived from books, and from what I had seen of them on my journey out in Rangoon, Upper Burma, and the Straits Settlements. There, although they are an important and increasing factor in the population

and wealth of the colonies, their political existence has hardly as yet begun.

Hongkong was at that time mainly occupied with the approaching annexation of the new territory of Kowlung, which was to be formally taken over by the British Government in a fortnight. The executive of the island was already engaged in erecting on the mainland barrack accommodation for the troops and police, and in generally preparing the natives for the change of rule and the comparative civilisation that it would entail. Within the last few days, however, a considerable number of anti-foreign or "patriotic" placards had been posted and disseminated in the small market town and villages of Kowlung. As this was calculated to cause trouble at the outset, though it was presumably only the work of a few ill-conditioned and irresponsible outlaws, Sir Henry Blake, the Governor of Hongkong, determined to personally visit at his Yamen in Canton the Viceroy of the Two Kwangs (as the provinces of the South China Littoral are called), and so endeavour to nip any insurrection in the bud. His Excellency, with whom I was staying, allowed me to accompany his staff as extra A.D.C., and we started early one morning on H.M.S. *Fame*, one of the destroyers then in harbour.

From Hongkong to Canton, up the broad estuary of the Pearl River, is little over eighty miles, a distance which we accomplished in the very respectable time of three hours and a half,

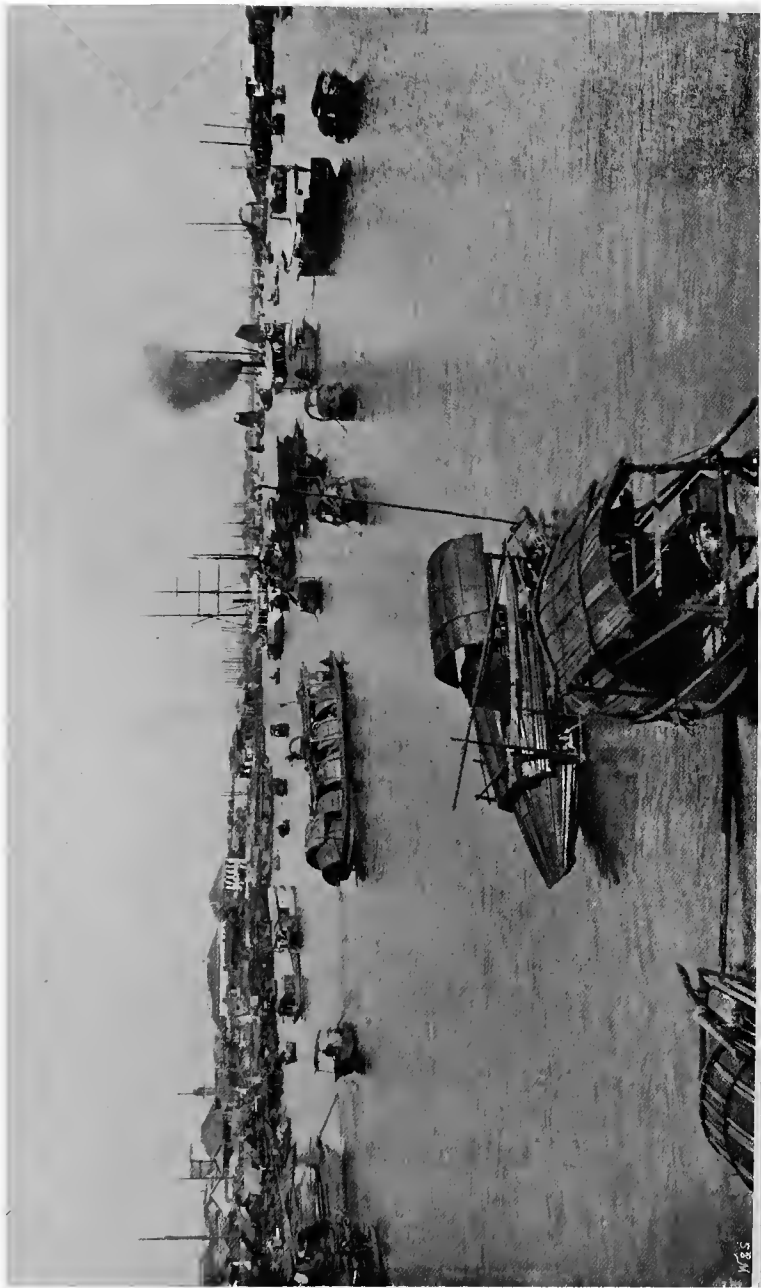
steaming at twenty-three knots. We scudded across the narrow straits in among the green little islands, and soon entered the river. Once past the Bogue Forts the low banks begin to close in, and some faint idea of the enormous traffic and floating population of the vast Chinese city dawns on one. Heavy stern-wheelers, junks of the most grotesque design, gaudy flower boats and fragile sampans underlie a regular forest of masts and bunting, and are alive with swarms of half-naked coolies, chattering traders, singing girls and sailors, all with their families and children—a world whose ancestors have probably been more or less amphibious for the last five centuries. As one nears Canton, with its beautiful pagodas and terraced gardens, a perfect babel of noise becomes incessant, everybody screaming orders, advice or abuse at the pitch of his or her voice, so that it is a marvel to the callow European how anything ever progresses. The secret seems to be that no one pays the slightest attention to what any one else says, and the rower, porter or skipper, while yelling derisive directions to some other craft fifty or sixty yards away, still manages to go on with his own work, though he is always apparently just on the point of deserting it in order to assist or assault some one else who is absolutely unconscious of his existence.

To steer a path through such a turmoil would ordinarily be a labour of hours, were it not that Chinese courtesy, extraordinary luck or “beneficent influences” (a safe and comprehensive term that

involves no "loss of face") invariably opens, as if by magic, a clear way for the foreign warship. So we glided on and soon anchored off the British Consulate with the usual celerity and accuracy that distinguish H.M. Navy. The Consul's boat, flying his blue ensign and manned by Chinese rowers, came off for us, and we went on shore to get into uniform for our state visit.

The Viceroy, Tan-chi-lin, had been warned of our arrival, and had turned out all the available troops in the city to line the two miles of streets from the gates of the Settlement to his Yamen. Many of these warriors however, promiscuously armed with tridents, matchlocks, and modern rifles, were only coolies dressed up for the day. The practice of officers commanding Chinese regiments is to keep their roster up to full strength (on paper), and indeed to draw the equivalent pay and rations for the benefit of their private pocket, but not to curtail the liberty of the subject by enforcing his attendance at parades or other duties except on extraordinary occasions such as the present.

Our cortège started in ten four-bearer chairs, the Governor wearing his G.C.M.G. collar and the rest of us in full dress. "Even their buttons are solid gold" murmured the rabble, and this specious affluence to a certain extent restrained those delicate or indelicate innuendoes with which the passing foreigner is usually saluted in a Chinese city. Our progress was necessarily slow as we were carried through the narrow crowded streets



[Face p. 4.

THE CANTON RIVER.

between shops glittering with gorgeous sign-boards and stacked with silks, ivory and drugs, or steaming with hot food of all sorts. Numerous spectators of every class, from mandarin to beggar, presented an infinite variety of humanity, their countenances a study of interest, apathy or dislike—but they gave their feelings no hostile demonstration.

After nearly an hour's ride we at last arrived at the double gates, emblazoned with the orthodox dragons, of the Viceregal Yamen. The regulation pause of two minutes ensued and then these were flung open and a vista of courtyards was disclosed, the central passage being lined with silk-clad officials in red plumed hats, blue feathers and crystal buttons, between whom we were borne up to the steps of the audience chamber.

Here, the chairs being set down, the Dzungduh or Viceroy, dressed in fur and satin and with his red-buttoned hat on, received us surrounded by his court, and then led us into a gilded and mirrored hall. In this we took our seats at a long narrow table, our host at the top, with Sir Henry Blake and the British officers on the right, and his own satellites on the left. The minor myrmidons and such of the crowd as had been able to surge into the outer precincts of the Yamen, were already packed against the glass windows of the hall, whence for the next two hours they devoured us with their eyes.

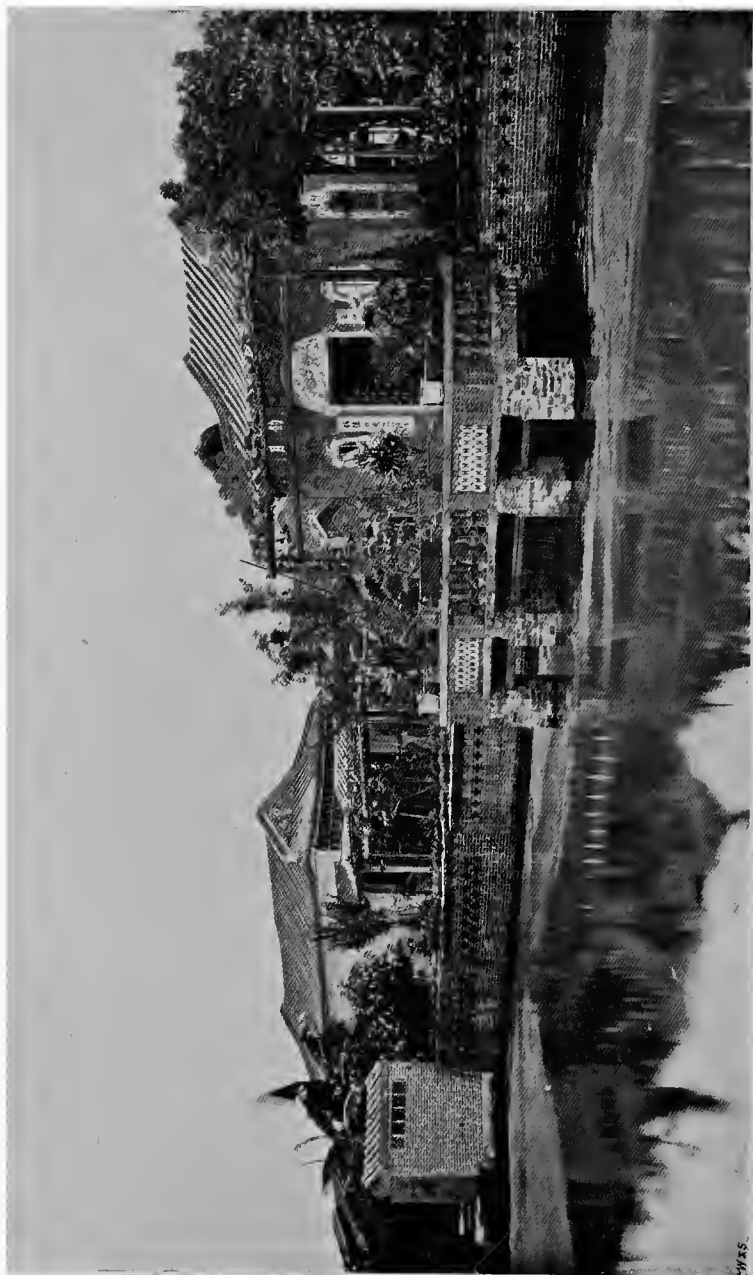
As soon as the first compliments had been exchanged a cold collation was served, consisting mainly of fruits and sweetmeats, accompanied by

the peculiar but inevitable champagne which is known to all residents in China as Taotai Brand. The same bottles, costing two shillings apiece, do duty at many banquets, and though no European has ever been daring enough to drink it, the liquor presents a hospitable not to say a luxurious appearance. The ice being thus broken a discussion commenced with regard to the matters in hand, during which I had my first experience of Chinese diplomacy and its elusive obstinacy. The Governor spoke, the Consul translated, and the Viceroy replied. Occasionally a satellite concurred. Time flew by. We endeavoured to look as impenetrable as our *vis à vis*, and not to feel cold. At last the unctuous arrogance of the Viceroy began to merge into a valedictory geniality. There was a pause, an official sighed, and tea appeared. The interview was terminated.

With mutual deference the Governor and the Viceroy carefully lifted and sipped their cups at exactly the same moment to show their equal rank. We followed suit; and in an atmosphere of comparative warmth we took our leave and returned the way we had come.

The garrison and the patient crowd, now considerably augmented in numbers, were still at their posts, consumed with curiosity, and hardly had we got back to the Consulate when a return visit of two Taotais arrived to present Sir Henry Blake with the Viceroy's compliments and adieux.

The destroyer did not waste much time in getting



FLOWER GARDENS AT CANTON.

back to Hongkong, its high rate of speed and the resulting wash causing considerable excitement along the river banks, where the junkmen evidently looked on it as some new and highly dangerous class of "devil boat," with which they had been hitherto unacquainted.

I had now determined, instead of proceeding up the coast by the ordinary mail steamer to Shanghai, to make my way across the provinces of Kwangtung and Kiangsi to Hankow on the Yangtze Kiang. This southern part of China had recently been very little travelled in, and promised from its dense population, its fertile country, and its convenient waterways, to afford a journey of interest and value. Accordingly I returned in a day or two from Hongkong to Canton and visited its famous temples and flower-gardens. Having then with the assistance of the Consul made my arrangements, I went on by a small steam launch to Samshui, the Treaty Port at the junction of the North and West Rivers. Here a junk was to meet me, and from here the real start was to be made.

My preparations were on no large scale and did not take very long. The most important question was that of servants, the next that of food.

A reliable, bold, and more or less honest servant is a prime necessity in any inland voyage in the East. It is, I know, rather the fashion to run down Chinese "Boys," as they are called, and to accuse them of systematic peculation, indifference to their master's interests, cowardice and lying, but I am much inclined from my personal experience to

disagree with most of this. Either I always had exceptional luck, or else the average Chinese servant is much better than he is painted. My first man, who came from Hongkong and accompanied me on the journey I am now describing, was perhaps a cut too high for roughing it, and so did not enjoy particularly good health, but otherwise he was honest, hardworking and smart, a combination of virtues which is not often met with. Subsequently H. M. Consul at Newchwang found me a man who was with me for all the rest of my time in the Far East, and who displayed, in addition to the qualities mentioned above, a very remarkable degree of courage and loyalty, on more than one occasion risking his life for his master. It would therefore ill become me to decry a class that have served me so well, and with whom as a rule I have been well content. Responsibility and "face" have of course a great deal to do with their conduct. One can always count on one's head man—No. 1 Boy as he is called—far more than on a subordinate. He is more or less bound to see you through. He has got some idea of the European way of looking at things, and he as a rule identifies himself with the interests of your dignity, your comfort and your purse, quite as much from a queer Chinese code of honour he possesses, as from the hope of personal profit.

After servants comes food—also a very vital question in the East, as on it to a great extent depends one's health. In the present instance I

was going to travel most of the way by boat, the most expeditious and convenient method in the south of China, where rivers are numerous and cart roads non-existent. Accordingly it was possible to carry more stores and baggage than is generally advisable. I therefore laid in a stock of flour, tinned meat and light wine—things which are almost a necessity in a land where rice supplies the place of corn, and where the water is nearly always unsafe to drink. Some simple cooking things, a roll-up bed, a pith helmet, a carbine and cartridges and a Union Jack completed my outfit. The last item is of considerable value, as the various “likin,” or inland customs stations, which are dotted all over the interior of China on the mountain passes and chief waterways, at once recognise the foreign ensign at the masthead, and your boat sails past the office of the greedy but disappointed tax-gatherer without opposition. It also brings home to the lines of junks waiting their turn at the barrier, and dismally speculating on how much they are going to be robbed of by the “kwan,” the fact that the “flag covers the goods,” and suggests to them the utility of “transit passes,” if not of British nationality and free trade.

As regards the carbine, it was taken out of deference to my “laoban” or skipper, and was only once used to shoot (at) an eagle. Pirates of the most bloodthirsty and invincible character were said to be swarming on the North River. Any one’s life, especially a foreigner’s, was said to be not worth

three days' purchase, and though my junk's crew of five men were (said to be, by themselves) the bravest and most devoted Chinese in the province of Kwangtung, the captain felt it incumbent on him to emphasise the danger by refusing to proceed under any circumstances. This necessitated his having an interview, at the instance of the English Commissioner of Customs who was my host and mentor, with the civil magistrate. A transfer of property at that official's Yamen (of five dollars or forty blows with the bamboo, I did not inquire which), resulted in the skipper's discovering that the whole tale of the pirates was a mistake, and that if the "Daren" took a gun (for "look see") the journey to Shaochoufu at the head of the river would be expeditious, secure, and even agreeable. So everything was comfortably settled.

It only remained to get a coolie or second man to help my servant, and here again my friend the Commissioner came to my aid. In order not to lose time he "borrowed" for me a soldier from the detachment of the Imperial Chinese Army then quartered at Samshui. His pay was to be twelve Mexican dollars a month (twenty-four shillings), allocated as follows: three dollars to the captain of his company "not to know"; three dollars to his sergeant "to let him go"; and the remainder, with his food, for himself.

At 2 p.m. on the afternoon of April 8th we unmoored from the shore opposite the single European house of the Treaty Port, exploded

the customary fire-crackers to appease water-devils and others, and to attract any "south beneficent influences" that might be handy and disengaged, and turned our bows to the north.

The junk was a small flat-bottomed wooden craft drawing twenty-four inches, and about thirty feet long and eight broad. There was a short open deck forward, on which the men rowed or poled in the day and slept at night; amidships a cabin in which I had a table, chair and bed; with a smaller cabin behind it in which my servants lived; and aft of that again the dwelling place of the skipper, his wife and family, where also the cooking was done. By extricating himself from this lair through a sort of porthole arrangement, the skipper was able to emerge on a two foot poop, whence he generally directed the navigation, steering by a long tiller that projected over the roof. The mast was immediately in front of my door, and outside the cabins along the gunwale ran a six inch footboard which served as a gangway from stem to stern.

The usual method of progression was by tracking, three men on the towpath, one piloting sounding and fending off at the bows, and the laoban at the helm; but if the water was deep enough two big oars or huloes slung on to stout posts on the foredeck were used instead. When there was a propitious wind we sailed, and if the water was exceptionally shallow the men punted along the footboards. We averaged thirty miles or so a day, going from dawn to sunset with an occasional halt for food, and

invariably moored along the bank in the evening, as nearly all Chinese are, or profess to be, mortally afraid of travelling by night. The hire of the boat was fifty dollars, and the two hundred miles up to Shaochou took us seven days.

The country, which is mainly under rice varied by occasional tea plantations and mulberry groves, is at first rather flat, but as we ascended the river we gradually got among the hills. The scenery then became very attractive. High cliffs with temples built into the rock, and dragon gods and goddesses painted on the stone, hung over the water. On every salient bluff or wooded hill stood a storied pagoda, more or less ruinous but always picturesque, and generally dominating some queer little village or town.

This disposition of pagodas round a town is a most important item in its prosperity. Their function is not only to attract and direct healing and rich "spirits," but also to ward off, if possible in the direction of a rival community, evil, poor and burning "influences." The science of Fengshui (wind and water) appears to resemble billiards, as angles, resistance and covering have all to be taken into account. For instance, if you build a high and expensive pagoda just opposite a hill that lies on the southward aspect of a town, it would not only not be beneficial to it, but might even do it considerable harm. The good influence coming along from the south would be deflected by the hill into some new cross country direction, which would benefit nobody,

while disaster hurrying down the current would first be blocked by the hill and then thrown back on to the town. The solution in this case would be, I think (though I speak under correction), a stone wall with two "terrifying war god" pictures, built to the north of the town and at a higher altitude than the hill, while a geometrical arrangement of two or more pagodas in échelon to the east would not only protect the flank from bad devils, but would decoy or shunt good south influences into a sort of siding, and bring them to rest in the town. The subject, as also that of graves, is an abstruse and often an arbitrary one, but it affords an honourable livelihood to a large tribe of priests and geomancers. Indeed these gentlemen are not infrequently quite unable to find a propitious burial spot for the defunct rich, thus relegating the corpse to his heir's drawing-room, until the latter meets their views as to remuneration.

The first town of any importance which lay on our road was Yen Hsien, where I landed to explore and for the first time heard the expected but none the less annoying cry of Fan-kwei. It is of course the ordinary term by which the Chinaman in the street designates the foreigner, and some sinologues have even gone so far as to invest it with a complimentary character, translating it "Ocean Spirit" instead of "Foreign Devil." It has, I confess, always struck me as rather the reverse, and Europeans generally feel it their duty, when possible, to emphasize this opinion to the Chinese.

As I entered the street one youth (at a safe distance) called to another :—

“ Hey yah, it is a devil ! ”

“ A *devil* ! What sort ? ”

“ Oh ! a *foreign* devil.”

“ Yes, a devil. A foreign devil ! ”

“ So it is. A foreign devil ! Heh yah, see the foreign devil.”

And so on. After a little time it becomes hackneyed and even offensive to the Aryan listener. In this particular case active retaliation was precluded by distance, so I had to be content with a look of dignified ignorance, which may or may not have deceived. But it takes a long time to tire a Chinaman.

A few miles beyond this place we descried the British colours on an even smaller junk than mine, and coming up alongside found a gentleman who was going to prospect for some mines in the vicinity of Shaochou. We continued our journey together for the remainder of the way to the Fu city, and spent several very enjoyable days examining the temples and occasionally picking up some small game. Going up stream one can nearly always count on walking faster than the boat, and accordingly little excursions into the villages can be made, or corners cut off, as the river always winds. Going down however, especially with the wind behind, more care has to be exercised, as otherwise there is a fair chance of being left sans everything, out of sight and mind, on the bank.

We arrived at Shaochoufu on the seventh day from Samshui, and I at once set about getting land transport. The river can be ascended for another fifty miles or so, but going is very uncertain, particularly at that season of the year when the freshet had not come down. My object now was to get across the Nanling Mountains which separate the provinces of Kwantung and Kiangsi, and form the water-parting of the Canton and Yangtze river systems, the Kan, one of the chief affluents of the latter, being navigable directly the hills are crossed.

Without much trouble my servant chartered a dozen coolies and cane-chair bearers for the hundred miles that lie between Shaochou and Nanan, and after a day spent in seeing the walled city, which is a small, poor and dirty edition of Canton, I started in the early morning with my first Chinese escort. This consisted of four Yamen soldiers clad in straw hats, baggy red sleeveless coats like tabards and decorated with inspiring Chinese characters, blue cotton trousers and pith sandals. Their arms were one snider, one prong, one sword, and four parasols. Nominally these soldiers are supplied free of charge by the Imperial Government, but in fact they have to be paid 20 cents a day for their food, as otherwise they would starve or pillage. As a rule however they are well worth their hire, for they will, short of actual fighting, assist and protect their whilom employer, get him rooms at the inns, groom his horses, and even carry his chair. The

so-called "hotels" in this part of the country are very bad, but luckily I was more or less entertained by the Chinese authorities the whole way. Every night on arriving at the walled city which in these populous provinces always marks the stage, we found some old Yamen, temple or Examination Hall set apart for us, where we were much more comfortable and quiet than at a crowded inn. Whether the places we stayed in were regular Kung Kuans or "pavilions for travellers of distinction," I never discovered, but I rather fancy they were not, and ascribe the mandarins' care of me either to a fictitious idea of my importance, or more probably to a wise prevision that in view of any possible trouble with such a *rara avis* as a foreign official, he had better be kept as secret and apart as possible during his stay.

At Nanhung I found two German missionaries who very kindly supplied me with bread, my flour being finished, and later on at Kian I met some French Catholic priests who showed me the courteous hospitality for which they are deservedly famous. With these exceptions I never saw a European until I got to the Poyang Lake, which is practically a part of the river Yangtze.

The coolies used to make excellent going, hurrying along the narrow winding paths that are banked up between the paddy fields, with their poles on their shoulders and my baggage dangling at either end over the slimy depths of mud in which a buffalo, a peasant and a plough were generally



RICE FIELDS.

[Face p. 16.]

wallowing. Every hour or so we would come to a wayside teashop, when they would halt to drink some tea or swallow a bowl of rice, cheerfully going on again in five or six minutes and solacing themselves the while with a pipe. Frequently we had to cross the river by ferries and this was again a little rest for them, while there was always an organised mid-day meal of half an hour's duration at which the loads were redispersed and shifted. Personally I used my chair very little, except on going into towns or when the sun became too hot, and so was able to see a good deal of the country and the people. There is a continual stream of passengers, as the great land trade route from Canton to Central China passes this way, and though since the introduction of steam on the Yangtze much of the through commerce has been deflected to the river, the inter-provincial and local traffic still follows the old road.

On the fourth day we reached the mountains. The Nanling range here rises to little over 1,000 feet, and is easily crossed by the fine rock-hewn causeway of the Meiling Pass. At its summit an ancient arch marks the boundary between the two provinces of Kwangtung and Kiangsi, and close to the crest are the sources of the Pe and the Kan rivers. The peasants about here are mainly Hakkas, speaking a dialect of their own, while their women, like the boat population of Canton, do not bind their feet. Closely adjacent on the west lies the province of Hunan, bisected like Kiangsi by

a fine waterway (the Siang) that also drains to the Yangtze through a great lake (the Tungting).

We got to Nanan the same day and were met outside the city gates by an outrider from the Yamen, who stated that a boat had already been chartered by the Prefect for my conveyance down the river, and was anxiously awaiting my arrival.

This message deceived us, and we followed the "tingchai;" but after we had been led by a circuitous route outside the walls to the river bank and had waited there for over an hour, an intimation came that there had been a mistake and that the boat would not be ready till next day. My servant, who had already been on two journeys to the Yamen to see some one or other was still for temporising, but as it was getting late and the gates might now be shut at any minute, I felt that a policy of deeds would be more effective than further words. Accordingly I had the baggage put on to a likely-looking boat of the light junk type that had been "negotiating" for some time with us and was, I strongly suspect, the craft that had been detailed for the duty of transporting us south, and then we ourselves embarked. I next paid off my coolies, instructed my servants to prepare my dinner and their own and to cease discussing the question as to whether the skipper could or could not go. I also advised my walking escort and some Yamen cormorants who had appeared to "assist" me, that no gratuities would be disbursed until a start was made. There was a certain amount of

outcry on the part of the boat's crew, but my people were tired and hungry and not inclined to argue much more, while direct appeals to myself I warded off with the blessed words "Pu-tung" (I do not understand).

Eventually a bargain was struck at a reasonable enough price, and at last at eleven o'clock at night we again started, both wind and stream being with us.

From here onwards the run was delightful. The scenery till far down the river was typical Chinese willow-plate pattern—wooded cliffs, painted pagodas, strings of straw-hatted, blue-coated coolies wheeling barrows or carrying loads, and occasionally long tent-roofed villages or bastion-walled towns, with fleets of junks and sampans moored along their embankments. We kept up a good pace for the weather was unusually fair, and the monotony of sailing was pleasantly enlivened by the number of rapids that we had to shoot, most of them only eight to ten inches fall, but swirling along with a tremendous noise and always necessitating a large fusillade of propitiatory fireworks.

At Kanchou we were boarded by a fresh escort of two soldiers, and henceforward all the way down to the capital, Nanchang, we were never without "military protection," the relief being generally in waiting at some unlikely headland, whence they had to be rescued by us with great labour and difficulty. They were I am sure quite needless, but as they helped a good deal on the boat and often got us a

“right of way” through the packed shipping in front of a town, it seemed better to keep them.

Kian was the next big place, and here as we arrived I saw a crucifix on the roof of a fairly large house that faced the river. On going ashore I found that this was a station of the Lazarist Fathers, who entertained me with some very interesting conversation and an excellent meal. They have been established in this part of China for many years and quite identify themselves with the people, dressing in Chinese clothes and eating Chinese food. The language they of course know as well as any European can ever hope to and they are very charitable, so that they are in sympathy with many of the poorer families and have a considerable number of converts.

It was ten days before we at last arrived at the provincial capital of Nanchang, and during the last hundred miles the country had become much flatter. On debouching however on to the Poyang Lake a fine range of hills comes into view, beyond which lies the great Yangtze Kiang. Nanchang itself is a large rambling city without any particularly striking buildings and not too clean. It is noted mainly for its modern porcelain, as Kintechin, the Imperial factory, is not far off on the eastern shore of the lake. The inhabitants are said to be anti-foreign, but as far as I was concerned they were quite well disposed. Indeed most of them were so taken up with staring at me, my clothes, hair and eyes that they had little time to evince hostilities. In point of fact I doubt



Face p. 20.

DOWN STREAM.

whether they ever realised that I was a foreigner, as in these parts the only foreigners ever seen are missionaries, who wear queues and native dress, and they probably looked on me as some rare, unknown class of heaven-descended being. Outside the town the paddy fields were nearly all under water and in many cases full of fish, for in the spring the thrifty and economical husbandman collects spawn from the rivers and ponds, and rears a second but finny crop while he cannot otherwise employ his land.

At Nanchang began the most dangerous part of the journey, for the one hundred and fifty miles run across the Poyang Lake to Kiukiang, the nearest Treaty Port on the Yangtze, had to be performed on a native worked Chinese steam launch. My servant contrived to get me a cabin as far removed as possible from the engine-room, and by the dispensation of Providence nothing untoward occurred, but he muttered in a most mournful voice as we steamed off :

“Engineer all same dam fool ; no savvy nothing. I very fear must too big explosion.” However, he was a pessimist.

The lake itself is very pretty and dotted with tiny green islands, which are sometimes submerged and sometimes attached to the mainland. One especially, a high upstanding rock with a fortified temple on its summit, recalls the castles of the Rhine and is a striking landmark for many miles. Rounding this in the afternoon we bore west into the broad turbid

expanse of the Yangtze Kiang, and going forty miles up it from the mouth of the lake arrived at Kiukiang before night.

Here I spent a night at the Consulate and then caught the regular steamer on to Hankow, a hundred and fifty miles further up the river and in the province of Hupeh. Here my journey ended for the time being. The distance from Canton by this route is about 1,100 miles and had taken us twenty-four days.

At Hankow I was most kindly entertained by Mr. Pelham Warren, the British Consul-General, and here I spent some little time before going on again to the north.

CHAPTER II

HANKOW TO PEKING

HANKOW is the chief Treaty Port of Central China, and is the highest point on the Yangtze Kiang to which large steamers can ascend. It stands at the confluence of the Han with the Yangtze and is the distributing mart of the tea trade. In the last ten years its importance has increased enormously and it seems probable that in another decade it will be the largest city in the whole empire.

From a Chinese point of view however Hankow itself is nothing, and Wuchang, the viceregal capital on the opposite shore, is everything.

During the week I spent here I visited Wuchang, which it need hardly be said does not compare for life, activity, wealth, and population with Hankow. It is however an interesting place. Although on this occasion I did not meet His Excellency Chan-chi-tung, the celebrated Viceroy of the Hukwang provinces, I was able to form some idea of his enlightened and beneficent rule from the progressive state of the local administration. There was at Wuchang at that time an excellent

college, directed by German officers, for the education of the Chinese army cadets. Although the inmates, strange as it may appear to us, have to be paid and fed by the Imperial Government in order to induce them to enter the institution at all, they turn out smart and intelligent pupils. The misfortune is that not a few of the best of them, having learnt English, Western geography and history and the principles of engineering, with a view to becoming soldiers, are, on leaving the establishment, attracted by the superior pay and advantages offered them by a business life. In consequence not a few of them on completing their course of education at the expense of the State, refuse their commissions as officers, and elect to follow the more lucrative but less bellicose profession of a comprador or mercantile manager.

It must be remembered of course that the civilization of China has been for centuries purely literary, the military career being always held in contempt and confined to the lower and illiterate classes. There has been no chivalry as in Europe, and the warrior caste, instead of being honoured as it has been and still is among both Christian and Mohammedan nations, has been immemorially identified with brigands and boors, who are ignorant of the polite arts—a necessary evil, but in no way comparable with the great learned bureaucracy that is founded on the teaching of Confucius and the sages.

Whether any rate of emolument or any access of rank will ever be able to eradicate this idea it is

hard to say. But until soldiering generally is more respectable and more respected in China, it will be difficult to organise a practical army, and almost impossible to form a corps of officers. It may indeed be said that European officers are what is wanted for the Chinese, and not native ones, who might not only be unreliable and peculating, but even at times dangerous to the progress of European interests. This may be so, but there must always be that intermediate class, the Subadars and Jemadars of India, the N.C.O's of England, who are of the men and yet above them, and who keep in touch and in sympathy both with their superiors and with the rank and file. These can only be formed from amongst the natives themselves and are an absolutely essential factor for the well-being of any disciplined force that is to be effective. Whatever the solution is the question can hardly fail to be of the greatest interest when the reformation of the Chinese army is taken in hand, especially now that we know that the material for good troops certainly exists and only needs proper development.

Besides the college, where both the drill and bearing of the cadets as well as their knowledge of the subjects of education struck me as of a distinctly high standard, I saw some "foreign-drilled" troops in Wuchang. These were chiefly from the province of Hunan, which with Shantung produces the most independent and bravest men and also those of the best physique in the empire. Here the comparison between the ordinary, slouching, dirty

Chinese "brave" and these fine, tall fellows, well set up and smartly dressed, was most remarkable. Militarism had evidently come into fashion throughout the whole quarter, for even the unclad infant was parading the gutter with a flag and a drum, and saluting the foreigner as he passed in correct Teutonic fashion—a most unusual and unorthodox pastime for the juvenile Celestial. Altogether I was agreeably surprised by the capabilities shown by the troops that were under foreign officers, and when I subsequently fought beside the men of our own Wei-hai-wei regiment, who are nearly all from Shantung, I was still more impressed by their discipline and daring. There is to my mind no doubt whatever that, given the proper conditions, a really efficient army could be raised and maintained in China by a foreign Power.

The Viceroy however has by no means confined his attention and organising faculties to his soldiers. He has a first-class mint with modern apparatus, turning out silver dollars and smaller coin which have become deservedly popular in his provinces. At Hanyang he has a large iron foundry and arsenal, and at the Liu mines in Hunan he has built a narrow gauge tramway to bring coal down to the Siang river. He possesses quite a flotilla of shallow draught steam launches which ply up the Yangtze and across the Tungting Lake, and is really doing his best to assist and encourage the trade of his viceroyalty in every way. Nevertheless the little Treaty Port of Hankow, with its



BUND AT HANKOW.



BRITISH CONSULATE-GENERAL, HANKOW.

[Face p. 27.]

splendid bund and its long line of magnificent red brick houses, stands as an ever-present object lesson of the power, the riches, and the advance of the foreigner, even to the most progressive Chinaman. To the retrogressive it is no doubt a hateful, barbarian eyesore, and the only modern manufactures that he can tolerate are probably the new cannon which he hopes will some day knock it all down.

In Hankow I was considerably interested in observing the commercial strides forward that the Russians have made during the last few years. Hankow is the central tea mart of the whole Empire, and as the great mass of Chinese tea goes to Russia it is perhaps natural that the Russians should be very much in evidence. Their leading firms now have branches established in Ceylon, and the Chinese and Singalese teas are blended and so find their way into the Western European market, where they are again creating a demand. The Russo-Chinese Bank, which has a good deal to do with the financing of the Lu-Han Railway, the new line that is to run from Hankow to Peking, has also a large and prosperous agency here and is competing strongly with the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation. The principal river steamboat companies, which ply down to Shanghai and up to Ichang and even to Chungking, remain English; for the German, Japanese, and American carrying trade is as yet very small on the inland waters. The bulk of the imports is also still British, though the three

last-named nations are making yearly progress in supplying China with cheap modern articles.

To attempt however to epitomise the trade or the trading prospects of Hankow is not my intention. Better and more copious information can be discovered in those excellent Blue-books which are so often published and so rarely read. But one thing should not be forgotten. It is this. When the trunk lines from Peking and Canton are completed, their point of junction, Hankow, situated as it is at the centre of the chief waterway in the Empire, will increase enormously in affluence and importance. It is already the focus of the markets of China, the seat of her most powerful Viceroy, and one of her largest cities. When the railways that connect it with the northern and southern littorals are built, it will become the commercial metropolis of the entire country.

There is another thing. The Manchu dynasty may well decide in view of recent events to permanently change the site of their capital—for now that the effective possession of Manchuria has gone from them the *raison d'être* of Peking has gone with it, and indeed its proximity to Manchuria may even constitute a danger.

Should they so decide, Hankow would appear to offer the best situation for a fresh seat of government. Sianfu, remote and unapproachable from the south and the east, lies strategically open to the north-west, and isolated as it is can never attain to any position by its trade. Chentu is in an almost

unknown country, out of touch with the coast and close to the frontiers of barbarian Tibet. Nanking could always be threatened by the fleets of the foreign Powers.

Hankow, however, is both far enough from and near enough to the seaboard to be in communication with but not in danger from it. It is already rich, and it has the most brilliant prospects before it. It is hard by the loyal province of Hunan. It is in fact at the centre of resistance of China. As a capital it would tempt the most reforming monarch or the most reactionary court, and its selection should promote not only the trade, but also the political stability and civilisation of the whole Empire.

Beyond meeting officials and local specialists there is little of China itself to be seen in a Treaty Port, and after a week's stay in Hankow I prepared to continue my land journey to Peking. The route I had selected was roughly that to be followed by the Lu-Han Railway; straight over the great plain to Kaifong the capital of Honan, across the Yellow River to Weihui, and thence down the Wei Ho to Tientsin and Peking—making another thousand miles or so in all.

I started in scorching heat at the end of May, travelling in a chair or on horseback myself, and with my baggage in three cumbrous native wheelbarrows. These machines are harnessed to one coolie in front and pushed by another behind, and bump over the primitive roads slowly and ponderously, making a dreadful noise. Before two

days had gone by I changed them for a small cart drawn by three horses, which I found much lighter and quicker, and much less trouble to look after.

We crossed the low hills that mark the northern watershed of the Yangtze at a distance of a hundred miles from Hankow, and the scenery then became and continued for many days absolutely monotonous. An unbroken, treeless plain of cracked and dusty loess, parched white and brown with the sun and very little watered; the villages built of mud, dirty and crowded; the population poor, hard-worked and heavy-eyed, and showing neither intelligence nor energy.

The inns were wretched hovels for the most part, a distinct change for the worse after the clean stone temples and spacious halls I had lodged at in the southern provinces. There were hardly any buildings of note or beauty, and even the local mandarin was generally housed in some dusty, tumble-down old Yamen, with broken painted doors and crumbling walls.

My escorts also became more and more ragged as we proceeded, and the poverty of the country was well exemplified by a small official who attached himself to my people and begged me to pay for his nourishment. After ten days' rather tedious but solid marching we at last arrived at the substantial city of Kaifongfu, interesting as having formerly been the home of the Chinese Jews. It is not known for certain when Judaism first made its entry into China, but it was probably during the sixth or



STREET IN KAIFONG.

seventh century, in the wake of Islam. The Jews were called the "people who cut the sinew," alluding to their habit of preparing food; but as time went on they got merged in the stronger religion of Mohammedanism, and fifty years ago nothing but a deserted synagogue and some forgotten scrolls of the law attested their whilom existence.

Kaifongfu is the regular northern type of city, with huge clay walls of twenty miles circuit, massive battlements and beetling gates—like an enormous factory—and inside vast empty spaces that are often under water. The streets are broad and deep, either in mud or dust; the shops are mere booths with few wares in them, and there is a general air of neglect and decay about the whole place. Life is much more stagnant here than in the south, and one does not see the same comfort, the same traffic or the same vitality as in Canton and on the Yangtze. The people, though supposed to be anti-foreign, chiefly I believe because very few foreigners ever go to Kaifongfu, struck me as much less inquisitive though more apathetic than I had expected, and certainly did not trouble us at all.

I was hurried on however almost at once, by the news that the Yellow River was in flood and likely to be difficult to cross, and accordingly I determined to lose no more time on the road than was absolutely necessary, especially as the summer heat was now becoming intense.

The ten miles from the city down to the southern

or right bank of the mighty Hoang Ho we easily accomplished, but we were there disagreeably surprised to find a packed mass of thirty or forty carts waiting for a single ferry-boat that was barely capable of accommodating two. We were now informed that no craft had crossed for three days, owing to the strong wind and current, and that if one did make the attempt the chances were that it might spend anything from ten to forty hours *en route*.

By dint of money, exhortation, and the persuasive powers of my escort, who had no intention of spending a night on the bank, we at last managed to get the ferry-boat people to take us on board at any rate. Some forty foot passengers were also admitted, apparently as my guests, for they did not pay. Most comprehensive preparations as if for a sea voyage were then made, and finally we started across, punting in a diagonal direction towards the opposite shore.

The Yellow River is here about a mile and a half broad and averages three feet deep, with a four to five knot current. There are practically no towing paths, for the cliffs at the sides are eroded underneath and always falling in. The uncertain channel, rapid freshets and general vagaries of the stream render sailing up it a most laborious task, while going down is very dangerous. This does not much matter as there is nowhere to go to, and in thirty miles or so the river becomes quite unnavigable. Crossing it is however a necessity, and accordingly

huge lumbering ferry-boats are hauled, poled or pushed over daily.

In our case we were, I suppose, lucky—at least so my companions said. Personally I should not care to experience an unlucky crossing if it is much worse than ours was. First of all the crew stripped, got into the water and began to drag the flat-bottomed boat slowly along. After about three hours of this, with a rushing current and wind against us on the beam, we found ourselves nearly in mid-stream. There was then a halt for tiffin and the anchors were dropped, things apparently going on as well as could be expected.

After an hour's wait, however, when I suggested continuing, the skipper informed me that his men were too tired and were not sufficiently numerous to work the boat over under such conditions. He proposed, he said, waiting until dark, in the hope that the wind would then abate. This did not suit me at all, and I pointed out that not only my party but no one on board had any food. The skipper said that did not matter and was not his business. An increase of pay was suggested, but met with no response. There was then a dreary pause of half an hour more, during which I took counsel with my servants and soldiers.

The skipper was then approached again with a view to his enlisting or impressing the other native passengers to help to push the boat over, as his own men were evidently not strong enough for the job. This he flatly refused to do, and so we were.

at last driven back to the ancient but convincing argument of force.

My servant at my instance explained to the passengers that it would be for the good of all that they should assist in getting the boat across, and he offered them a small honorarium for doing so. He added, however, that should they demur to this proposal the foreign Excellency would be compelled to resort to other measures. As there was still hesitation, not to say recalcitrancy, plainly visible, while the sailors refused to move at all, I then took the nearest and assisted him into the river, which was here about thirty inches deep. The effect was instantaneous, for in a few seconds every one from on board was stripped and up to his waist in the river, pushing the boat for dear life. By this somewhat arbitrary way, often the only solution of difficulties in China, we completed our crossing of the Yellow River, arriving in the evening on the northern shore after a seven hours' passage. As far as I could discover no one of the impressed coolies was particularly annoyed, most of them treated the affair as a joke, and all were distinctly glad to be on dry land in time for supper, and to get the few strings of cash we gave them apiece as a reward for their labour.

We ourselves pressed on and got to an inn some miles from the river late that night, proceeding next morning on our road to Weihui at the head of the Wei River.

Wide grass embankments here protect the low-

lands from the devastating floods, and after these are passed one enters a more fertile district, where fruit, corn and millet are universally grown. Rice has now become a rare and expensive luxury, though as soon as one strikes the Grand Canal it again gets cheaper, that being the route by which all the tribute rice comes up to Peking from the Yangtze and the southern provinces. The country round is also rich in coal and iron fields, some of which are included in the concessions of the Peking Syndicate. About these I shall have occasion to speak later on. Here there is in consequence considerably more evidence of diffused prosperity than south of the Yellow River, though, except for the orchards, the scenery both of town and country is unattractive.

In two days we came to Weihui, and the land part of the journey was now over. The town is small and mean, and only exists by reason of its position at the navigation limit of the Wei Ho, but we were very glad to see it.

I now engaged a narrow cramped boat of a new pattern, "a Tientsin house-boat," not nearly so comfortable as those on the southern waterways, and started down the little river to the north. The banks are steep, the country closely cultivated and the flat fields interminably swept by dust storms which often compel one to lie-to for a whole day or more.

After some 250 miles we joined the Grand Canal at a big likin station, where chains were slung

across the river to prevent any boat from passing without paying the inevitable tax. The flag by day, however, or the cry of "Haikwan" (Sea Customs) or "Yingkwo" (English) by night, speedily cuts the Gordian knot in the case of a foreigner, while the small official in charge, roused from his sleep to unlock the chain, looks down from his lair above with disappointed avarice. We went on very late every evening as there was a moon and made on this journey very good time, so that by June 15th we entered the immense press of boats which crowds the canal entrance to Tientsin.

This enormous native city, with its million inhabitants and its comprehensive trade, is one of the most thriving places in the Empire. The Chinese railways begin here, and the Treaty Port has always been an important commercial centre. Events which are subsequently described brought Tientsin later on into such prominence that it is not my intention to do more here than briefly notice it. It is the so-called port of Peking, though ships no longer ascend the Pai Ho higher than Tongku, thirty miles lower down, owing to the silting up of the river during the last ten years. It is the only Treaty Port of the metropolitan province of Chili, and the actual seat of its Viceroy, who nominally resides at Paotingfu. From it radiate the lines to Peking, Shanhaikwan and Manchuria, and near it at Tongshan are situated the headquarters of the Imperial Chinese Railways and the coal mines that first initiated their construction.



TARTAR CITY WALL, PEKING.

It has a good settlement, divided into the English, French, American and German quarters, some fine streets and wharves and a very large and growing trade. The chief foreign export is wool, which comes down on camel back from Kalgan and Kansu, and the main imports are piece goods and fancy articles. Being contiguous to the capital, the tribute rice, to which I have alluded above, is here collected before being despatched to feed the Manchu bannermen of Peking. Great masses of salt for the province are also stored here, and the banks of the Pai Ho are as crowded with bales as its waters are blocked with junks. The inhabitants, like those of Shantung, are tall and hardy, and are credited with being "very courageous." They certainly understand bluff very well, and in China that is often another word for courage.

The journey from Tientsin to Peking is accomplished in three hours by a fast train over a double track line that follows more or less the course of the river as far as Yangtsun, where the latter curves away to the right. It is the work of Mr. Kinder and his excellent staff of English engineers (in the pay of the Chinese Government), and had at that time only been running for a year or so. Already it had become immensely popular with the country folk and was paying a large dividend, the services being quick and regular and the line and rolling stock of the best.

Leaving in the morning and crossing over the gentle upward slope of the plain, the hills beyond

Peking soon come into view. The terminus at Machiapu, two miles from the metropolis, lies by the wall of the South Hunting Park, and a tram line runs in from here to the south gate of the Chinese city. (Since the Boxer rebellion and the capture of Peking the railway is to be continued to the city walls.)

Here I was met by one of my friends from the Legation, shot, alas! during the siege last year, and we rode up by the Temple of Heaven to the great Chen Mun or South Gate of the Tartar City. Close inside these walls is situated the British Legation, once the palace of the Manchu Duke Liang, and here I now took up my quarters, not sorry to rest a little after the dust, the heat, and the labour of travelling over the Great Plain.

CHAPTER III

THE BRITISH LEGATION

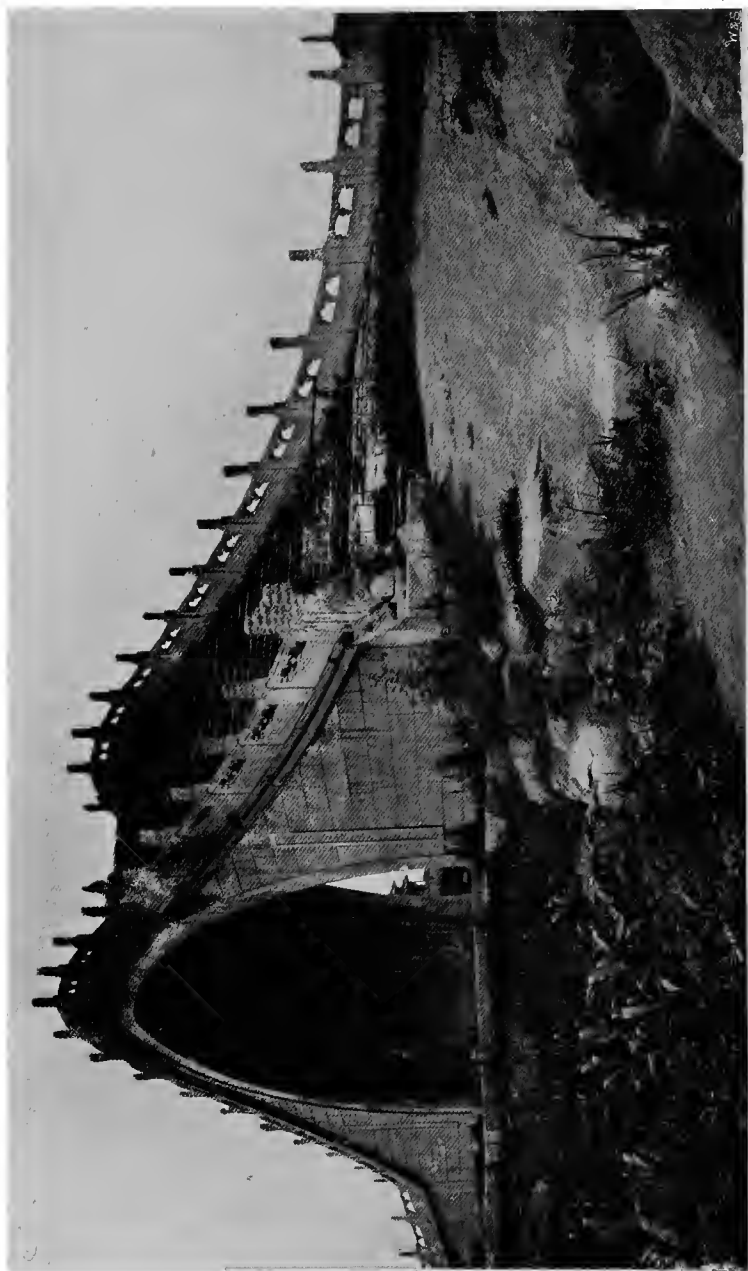
THE work in one of His Majesty's Embassies or Legations is, as a rule, most interesting, and as in an Asiatic capital the calls of society are not great, one can devote one's spare time to seeing something of Chinese life, as much as it is possible to do so.

It is obvious that a public servant is unable to discuss the subjects of his work except in the most general manner, and as generalisations are never particularly edifying or entertaining I do not propose to deal with the matters that occupied us in the Legation during the summer of 1899, beyond saying that things were quiet for the most part and that no very vital diplomatic questions were in progress. To most of us indeed everything seemed to fade in importance before the stupendous heat. The thermometer used to rise regularly to 110° by three o'clock in the afternoon, and on one or two occasions even to 115° , about which we boasted by telegraph in Canton. The new summer residence in the hills

was not then completed, so that we had to pass June, July and August in Peking itself.

Life, however, inside the high walls of the Legation, with its broad lawns and a comparatively pure atmosphere, was far more supportable than outside in the dusty malodorous streets. The curse of Peking is that it is absolutely impossible to avoid the foul sights and smells that infest it and make it superlatively disgusting even for China. The European eye may perhaps become more or less callous after years of education, but the European nose never.

Foreigners also are by no means popular in Peking, a fact that is early made patent to the new-comer. Even if one is not actually shouted at, one is frequently followed by an ill-conditioned rabble, and this makes going about unpleasant. In one way it does not matter very much, for there is little now to see in the way of sights. One by one the objects of beauty or interest, such as the Temples of Heaven and Earth, where the Emperor sacrifices twice a year, and the great Llamaserai of the Buddhist priests, have been closed to barbarian visits, and one even has difficulty in walking on the city wall. The society is no less limited, for there is no "Treaty Port," and practically the Diplomatic Corps, the Headquarters Staff of the Imperial Maritime Customs and the missionaries, are the only foreigners who reside in Peking. The buyer of *objets d'art* is much better and more comfortably served in his own house than in a shop, for the



HUNCHBACK BRIDGE NEAR PEKING.

patient and unflagging vendor of curios brings his best things—porcelain, ivory, silver or silks—to the “Yinkgwo-fu,” and prefers to exhibit them there rather than surrounded by a crowd in the street. Finally exercise can be got in the Legation, where there are five courts and tennis grounds, and even an embryonic bicycle track.

Accordingly, it is quite possible to pass a summer in Peking and never leave the precincts of civilisation, for the Legations, the Club, the Bank and the shops frequented by Europeans, all lie in a single small corner of the Tartar City.

Excursions of course there are, to the temples in the Western Hills, to the Great Wall and the Ming Tombs, and to Kalgan or Jehol—the traditional trips of the globe-trotter—but these are not Peking, and they have been so often and so well described that I do not propose to recount them here.

A visit to the Tsungli Yamen may perhaps amuse the reader, for it is, with rare exceptions, open only to officials. As we are now told that the Board itself is to be abolished, it may in the future attain a glamour of antiquity or interest which it certainly lacks in actuality.

One goes in a green chair or a blue cart, according to one's rank, with an escort of Chinese outriders or tingchais curvetting round on skittish Mongol ponies. After a clamorous ride through a filthy street the chair is dumped down in a mean and dirty courtyard, and its occupant ushered by an underling into a broad barely furnished room full of

windows and draughts, and divided into two by a half screen. Down the centre of its upper portion are a long table and some dingy chairs.

"Some of their Excellencies" (the Members) and occasionally his Highness (the President, who is a prince) then filter in and sit down, making listless inquiries about the foreigner's health. Servants flutter round with tea and pipes; and expectoration, sleep and private gossip go on freely among the Chinese contingent. I remember once sitting next to Shu Daren, who had been Chinese Minister in St. Petersburg when I was at the British Embassy there. I recalled it to him. "Woa chitou" (I know), he said. "You were an 'ah-tah-shey' (attaché). At this remark his colleagues contemplated him with pained surprise, not to say displeasure, while he exhibited a pardonable pride at knowing even a word of the "devil tongue." In point of fact I am convinced that the poor old gentleman thought it was my family name, and was as supremely innocent of French as he was of English or Russian. But he was a progressive, and lived the part, though it subsequently cost him his life. At the Manchu Council held last June, just before the siege of the Legations began, he with one other high official alone dared to lift up his voice against the foolhardy policy the Empress's advisers were initiating. Then and there, like another Lord Hastings, his head was cut off, his death attesting a courage and patriotism which are rarely found among the great mandarins.

To return to the Tsungli Yamen. After compliments, as they say in despatches, the subject in hand, whatever it is, is opened by the Minister or Chargé d'Affaires and translated aloud by his interpreter. One of the members may respond, and if he does a long discussion on both sides ensues. The Chinese arguments are usually an extraordinary mixture of childish folly, abysmal diplomacy and naked truth.

Suppose, for instance, the proposal of a British company to build a railway from Peking to the North Pole is under consideration. The Chinese objections (for there always are objections) are somewhat as follows :

(1) The south aspect of the Confucian gate at Kalgan would be subjected to a hot, unbeneficial, not to say blighting influence by the engines passing near it.

(2) The Patagonian Envoy would be angry.

(3) The honourable inns in Peking would be so crowded by poor ignorant people coming in to see the new magnificent railway that there might be a devastating famine.

(4) It would be necessary to obtain the consent of all the Mongol princes along the route selected. This would take time and cost money. Who would pay for it?

(5) The feelings of many other people (not stated who) would certainly be hurt if they were not asked to take a share in the construction (and the profits).

And so on. This is the usual class of opposition one has to deal with. And as fast as one argument is met another equally futile is advanced. Frequently however the answer is that the particular Minister who deals with such questions is away worshipping his ancestors, and that therefore the matter must stand over. Or if that will not satisfy the foreigner, then an effusive consent is given. Next time however that the question is alluded to, a week after, it is alleged that the consent was a complete dissent and that the interpreter made a mistake, or else the infallible card is played of "the Throne." "The Throne regrets, but . . ." and after that a fresh beginning had to be made.

The Throne is the mysterious and final *deus ex machinâ* that the mandarins invariably fall back on as a last resort. Barbarians do not often see it. When they do at Imperial audiences they are never quite certain that it really is it. It always speaks in an unknown tongue (Manchu) that is dubiously translated into high-flown Chinese by his Highness, kneeling on his knees and shivering in the cold, divine glare. Behind the Throne there is the still more potent power that directs it. But to this no decent or well-educated Chinese ever alludes.

The European community is still almost entirely ignorant of what passes inside the hallowed walls of the Forbidden City. Probably a great deal less of real political import and a great deal more of paltry court intrigue occupies the time than is usually

supposed. The only foreigners who are really at all in touch with Chinese native feeling are the missionaries, and these only in the provinces and with a small section of the lower classes.

So far the mandarinat has successfully opposed the entry of Christianity into its own ranks, for any mandarin who followed a Western religion would at once lose his place. To some extent the position is analogous to that occupied by the Early Church in the Roman Empire during the first century. A few staunch adherents, a few vehement opponents, but the great mass ignorant and indifferent. It is devoutly to be hoped that a similarly victorious career lies before missionary enterprise in the Eastern as it did in the Western world. No social revolution and no intellectual education could so thoroughly advance the moral and material evolution of China as the willing adoption of the Christian faith.

That the missionaries go about their work in the right spirit few can doubt. That they always adopt the best methods is more open to criticism, at any rate from the political standpoint. But then a utilitarian criticism has never been desired or accepted by the Lutheran Church, and even the proselytism of Rome cares little whether secular opinion approves their propaganda, or whether they are justified by results.

"These things," says the Church, "are too far-reaching in their ends and too broad in their scope for the generation of a day to judge of. Nothing

that statesmen or diplomatists can do will ever now seriously check our attempts to spread the faith, even though in certain cases they may be modified or directed by national aspirations. We can afford to disregard the outside public, to work on our own wide lines. We believe we are doing what is right, and in our eyes the high aims of monarchs or the blind movements of peoples are infinitely subordinate to the unalterable decrees of Heaven, whose ministers and soldiers we are."

There is much truth in this. The missionary body is a vast cosmopolitan force possessed of an influence and an affluence that are yearly increasing. Its servants are actuated by motives which hardly enter into the narrow business purview of the ordinary layman. They almost live in a different plane of thought. But they are a political power to be reckoned with, and it is better that they should be with us than against us, for the Church has always proved itself a puissant friend or a bitter enemy.

In Peking and in the Treaty Ports the visitor who inquires about missions and their work will always hear a great deal about the rice Christians—that is to say those Chinese converts whose steadfastness depends mainly on the material benefits that accrue to them from their religion. No doubt there is reason for this imputation in many instances; but there is also a vast amount of exaggeration. Any one who in the recent sieges of the foreign quarters in Peking and Tientsin saw

the thousands of natives that stuck to their new faith, who read of the thousands that were martyred for it in the provinces, can hardly question their honesty and single-heartedness. A year ago the general European opinion in China was that the Chinaman was a born indifferentist. The same cynical attitude obtained as to his courage ; he was a born coward. The events of 1900 have convinced most people who took part in them of the radical error of these two views. Under his apathetic exterior the Chinaman has after all a soul. He is apparently capable of being a good Christian just as he is of being a brave soldier, and the discovery is as important for the ethical as it is for the practical world.

Of the other two factors in the foreign society of Peking the Customs are the smaller and the diplomats the larger section. Both are cosmopolitan bodies, though the English element is well to the fore in both. Our trade naturally entitles us to a preponderant proportion in the allocation of the posts in the Customs service, which is also presided over by a Britisher. Our Legation in like manner is a bigger establishment than that of any other country, owing to the fact that the British Consular Corps in China has exceptionally large requirements. In the Legation the Student Interpreters, who subsequently become Consular Assistants and Consuls, learn the language of their adopted country and to some extent their future political, judicial and commercial work. After two years at

Peking they move on to a Treaty Port and begin to put theory into practice. There are often as many as twenty of them in Peking at a time, besides an efficient staff of older men who act as the Chinese Secretaries. So that the diplomatist who comes from a European or other post to pass a year or two in China is rather a superfluity in the presence of so much expert knowledge.

Of the Chinese in the capital one sees very little. It is the same with the Turks in Constantinople or with the Persians in Teheran. No Chinaman, whether an official or a private person, who is worth knowing, will frequent the house of a 'foreign devil'—let alone a Legation. It would cause him to be suspected by his friends and his superiors and might easily cost him his position. And besides the regular stereotyped contempt, which it is the proper fashion for the mandarins to affect towards us, there is also a good deal of real dislike, not to say disgust, for our manners and customs. They even say we smell unpleasant.

Conciliation, as in all Asiatic countries, is a bad way of converting these opinions: the logical faculty of the Chinese is not such as to grasp its object or its advantages: they understand the iron hand much better than the velvet glove. So that generally speaking utility is best served by meeting the insolent or arbitrary mandarin with his own weapons and on his own ground. This is not the practice of missionaries; but then, as has been said, the aims of missionaries are not so proximate nor



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APPROACH TO THE MING TOMBS.

their range so circumscribed as those of latter-day politicians.

As a rule, however, the breeding and innate conventions of an official will make him preserve the outward forms of politeness even to the foreigner he despises and hates. For a Chinese mandarin to lose his temper or to err in civility, even to a barbarian, would be to his mind disgraceful and ignominious to himself. But if he can covertly show his contempt without the foreigner perceiving it, then he has scored a triumph, though this is not nearly so much the case as it used to be. For the mandarin sees, even if his myrmidons do not, that every slight on his guest belittles his own dignity.

As regards the common people it is sufficient to say that a large proportion of them are of the Manchu stock, connected with or dependent on the Imperial dynasty, and therefore averse to anything democratic or new. The Chinese of Peking are moved by analogous feelings. They draw their livelihood from the court and the capital, not from the intrinsically small foreign population. At Peking they see no signs or evidence of foreign wealth or force. Many of them doubt even the existence of those warships and those soldiers of which they only occasionally hear. And it is always the popular cry to curse the "barbarian devil."

These of course are the impressions of a year ago. Now the memory of recent events and the perpetual presence of strong military guards may

appeal very forcibly to a nation that of all nations respects most the powers that be.

Whether toleration or sympathy will in time succeed to fear remains to be seen. The Chinese as a race are essentially a law-abiding people, and they are also materialists. Life is not long enough, they say, for fighting, which is after all a dangerous and uncivilised amusement. The probability is that if they are not harassed or pillaged by those in authority they will accept their existence and their rule with comparative equanimity if not with confidence, and once confidence is established stability begins.

There is another quality that they respect besides force. It is financial purity. Speculation has so cankered the Chinese bureaucracy that an honest official is to the ordinary citizen something almost superhuman. Integrity accordingly is venerated as the true hall-mark of the heaven-sent ruler who will renew the golden age of classical history and restore prosperity to China.

Force will no doubt always be a necessary factor in the proper governing of the Chinese Empire and its millions of souls, and more than one foreign nation is capable of applying it. But real sympathy can be achieved only by honest administration, and to institute this will be the really hard task and will tax the powers of the highest civilisation that has yet been developed in Western Europe.

CHAPTER IV

THROUGH MANCHURIA

ABOUT the middle of August I was sent on a journey across Manchuria, the extreme north-eastern portion of the Chinese Emperor's dominions. The summer rains had practically finished and in consequence the excessive heat had to some extent abated. But the lowlands were for the most part still a quagmire, while the rivers were in full flood, making travelling no easy or pleasant task. The first part of my journey however was performed by rail, and when later on the hard work began it was amply compensated for by the delightful climate and continual interest of the country through which I was moving.

Manchuria consists of the three provinces of Mukden (Shingking or Fengtien), Kirin, and Tsitsihar (Heilungkiang). It is the home and more or less the appanage of the present Imperial family, who call themselves in Chinese the "Ta-tsing" or "Great Pure" dynasty. Early in the seventeenth century Mukden city, the capital of the southern province, was their seat of government, and to this

day all the Imperial boards and colleges exist there as at Peking, though only for form's sake.

Since the Manchus have conquered China however they have practically disappeared from Manchuria, emigrating to the Eighteen Provinces or crushed out or assimilated by the vanquished Chinese in the guise of peaceful colonists—a veritable case of *cedunt arma togae*.

Fengtien and Kirin are already being rapidly filled up by the Chinese agriculturists, who multiply and prosper amazingly. Tsitsihar, the northern and by far the largest of the three provinces, is as yet comparatively empty. It is a hilly and wooded country, almost without roads, and infested in many parts by brigands. Here alone can the true Manchu be found and his language heard, and here so far very few Chinese are installed, though they are gradually making their way in. At present it is looked upon as an unknown and almost barbarian region, a sort of "Ultima Thule."

The chief geographical features in Manchuria are its excellent waterways, its splendid forests and its fertile soil. The Amur along the northern frontier, the Sungari and the Nonni in the centre, and the Liao and the Yalu to the south, supply the place of roads. Wood, costing nothing and plentiful everywhere, is an efficient substitute for coal or other fuel, and crops of all sorts, including wheat, millet, opium and beans, are raised on every side with little labour or expense.

Up to now Manchuria has never been properly



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A MANCHU FAMILY.

appreciated by the Chinese nation as a whole. Firstly through their ignorance of and distance from it, and secondly because immigration has been discouraged by the Manchu dynasty for political reasons. Those colonists, however, who have settled in its southern provinces fully realise its value, and have turned out a hard-working and in addition a hardy and progressive race. They are, for instance, excellent marchers and fair shots, they use dollars in preference to sycee, their women do not bind their feet, following the Manchu practice, and quite a considerable proportion of converts have been made among them by the European missionaries in the last quarter of a century.

Besides its other advantages Manchuria is distinctly rich in mineral wealth, not an El Dorado perhaps, but furnished well above the average with gold, silver and lead. Coal is much rarer ; but in a land so thickly timbered this is not a vital necessity. Indeed the Russians, who are now the most interested parties in the mines, burn wood along most of the Trans-Siberian Railway and also on their Asiatic river steamboats.

From Peking to Tientsin and Shanhaikwan I followed the Imperial Chinese Railway. At the latter place, the frontier of Chili and Manchuria, the line passes through the Great Wall, where the latter runs down to the sea. It then continues along the western and northern coast of the Gulf of Pechili to Kinchou and Newchwang,

where it terminates on the right bank of the Liao River. In August 1899 regular trains were only running as far as Chunghuso, forty miles north of Shanhaikwan, and beyond that point I had to journey by trolley as far as Kinchou. There for the time being the rails ended, though the embankment to Newchwang was nearly finished.

At Kinchou then I had to revert to the old system of horseback travelling at twenty-five to thirty miles a day.

It was some time, however, before I could manage to engage a cart for my baggage, as the country all round was up with brigands. This is not unusual in July and August, before the crops have been cut and when there is often a good deal of poverty and unemployed labour. Bands of peasants, collected and led by a few choice spirits who are confirmed vagabonds and outlaws, raid the smaller towns and villages, and when they are not supplied with food or money kidnap children or women as hostages.

They are of course pursued by the authorities, but only in a half-hearted way. No reliable information can be got as to their whereabouts from the terrorised or accessory villagers, while the soldiers who are sent to catch them do not care to risk their lives in a fight where there are few prospects of loot, and indeed are often of the same way of thinking as their enemies.

The mandarins know all this and are conscious of the futility of those "strong repressive measures" they are publicly enjoined to enforce, so that it is

only when some very big official or some foreigner suffers that they are really driven into effective activity. The brigands on their side are aware of their limits and accordingly abstain from molesting influential people, confining their attentions to the lower classes of travellers and residents, who can neither make reprisals themselves nor initiate them officially. When however a brigand really is caught he is promptly executed, and the successful mandarin is widely advertised and belauded by the authorities at Peking.

We lost three days in palavering at Kinchou, but at last, with the aid of two English missionaries and by dint of much blustering at the Yamen and threatening to telegraph to the Viceroy, a cart was found for my effects and a pony for myself. An escort of picked braves was also detailed to protect me on my "perilous" journey to Newchwang.

At three in the afternoon we started, and rode about ten miles that night, halting at an inn. Next morning the escort had totally disappeared, and we never saw them again ; so that for once in a way we inferred that there was some danger, at any rate in their eyes. As far as we were concerned however the route was most uneventful, for we never saw any signs of brigands, though judging from what we heard the country can have been hardly large enough to hold them. But the Chinese all over the Empire have a proud disdain for small figures, and ten is very rapidly multiplied into ten thousand.

Most of the plain, which slopes down to the sea, was under the high kowliang, or millet, that grows here to six or eight feet and sometimes increases several inches in a day and a night. It affords excellent cover and would baffle any pursuit, even if undertaken by the most energetic troops. Where there were no crops, broad grassy expanses of pasture land reminded one of the proximity of Mongolia, while the comparatively few and sparsely populated villages attested the fact that the Eighteen Provinces were at last left behind.

Several deep rivers had to be crossed by ferries, and the devious winding paths through the tall millet and the muddy state of the roads made our progress very tedious. All along the route gangs of coolies, mostly from Shantung, were working at the railway embankment, and the English engineers expected to have the rails and temporary bridges ready by Christmas. On the fourth day we crossed the Liao River and came into Newchwang by the Russian railway terminus on its left bank. No project has yet been decided on for connecting the two trunk systems by a bridge, though of course it is bound to come eventually. The best point for uniting the Port Arthur branch of the Trans-Manchurian line to the (former) Imperial Chinese Railway would be between Mukden and Sinminting, a hundred miles higher up the Liao, where there is a much narrower and easier crossing than at Newchwang. As the two gauges are different bulk would have to be broken in any case for goods,

and accordingly the existing system of transporting both passengers and cargo by boat may continue for some little time. But now that the Russians have taken over the Chinese line north of Shan-haikwan they will probably get the track altered quickly.

Newchwang, or more properly Yinko, is the only Treaty Port in Manchuria and is the shipping place for the bean-cake trade. This article, manufactured throughout the two southern provinces, comes down the river in hundreds of junks and is sent in large quantities to South China, the Yangtze, Japan and Korea. Skins, furs, cereals and timber are also exported, though to no very great amount. The total import trade is valued at about three millions sterling, a proportion of which is in the hands of the Americans and Japanese. The British have a considerable share in the piece-goods business, and the Germans here as everywhere are coming well to the fore. The Russians, strange to say, do hardly anything at all along the seaboard, though they have practically the monopoly of the trade across the land frontier of Manchuria, where they enjoy special tariff rights.

The commercial society of Newchwang, both European and native, was in 1899 not a little disturbed at the turn things were likely to take when Talienwan (or rather Dalny), at the foot of the Liaotung Peninsula, was opened to trade by the Russians as a free port. The Chinese indeed were under the impression that it would entirely

supersede Newchwang, owing to its having a commodious anchorage and to its being ice-free in winter. Up to date, however, no important change seems to be imminent, for though wharves and go-downs, besides a pier and other improvements, are being built at Dalny on the southern shore of the Talienwan bay, there has been no corresponding accession of population among the Chinese traders and no appreciable increase of business. Without prognosticating the future of Dalny this much seems sufficiently clear. If it is really to be a free port it will, no doubt, attract the best part of the Manchurian trade. But it is highly doubtful that it ever will be so. Even if there is no Customs frontier to the Russian hinterland—and the Imperial Maritime Customs authorities will certainly endeavour to have one soon—there will be the extra charge for freight entailed by a railway, always more expensive than sea transport. Should differential rates be imposed as well, the cost will be still heavier, and the great mass of the importers, who are not Russians, will stick to the old route. It may therefore be safely surmised that unless Dalny is made a really free port, as free as Hongkong, it will not compete with Newchwang very seriously. But of course this would not apply were a Russian tariff to be imposed on all Manchuria.

For several days I remained at the Consulate, where I was most kindly entertained by Mr. Hosie, hoping to get on towards the north by that section of the Trans-Manchurian Railway that was then in



CHINESE BANKERS AT MUKDEN.

working order. But floods, broken bridges and Muscovite procrastination at last compelled me to go by boat.

Five days tracking up the Liao River brought us to Mukden. This is a large military depôt and a prosperous trade and missionary centre. There are several big Chinese banks in the city, which have a wide business all over Northern China. There are also numerous interesting remains of the Manchu kings in its environs.

Every one was then occupied with the new Russian railway which had just been laid up to this point, and the arrival of the "fire-wheel cart" daily drew crowds of natives to see it. The track from here to the north does not touch Kirin city, but follows the Mongolian boundary to Kaiyuan, whence it goes direct to Asheho and Harbin. But as it was no good attempting to proceed by this way, owing to the floods, I chose the regular route, that is the main road to Kirin, which lies two hundred and fifty miles to the north-east. Having purchased a horse for forty dollars (£4) and hired a cart, we again set out, escorted by the inevitable braves, and soon entered the hilly wooded country that divides the two provinces from one another.

For the first sixty miles going is very heavy, and the roads are atrocious at this time of the year. Afterwards one leaves the marshy lowlands and gets on to a series of undulating ridges. Cultivation is now much sparser, villages are fewer and less thickly populated, and native traffic is much rarer.

We met, however, a considerable number of Cossacks coming down by cart from Eastern Siberia, some of them accompanied by their wives, all going to take up their duties along the trace of the new line. They appeared to get on amicably enough with the country folk and to conduct themselves quite decently, though later on it appears that serious grounds of complaint arose against them.

The task of building a new railway in a country like China is not, it may be imagined, an easy or a very grateful one. However honest and painstaking the concessionaires may be, they have continually to fight against the vested interests of both governors and governed. Attempts to buy the land piecemeal are very difficult. No sooner is the purchase of one field arranged for and the price paid for it, than a dozen other proprietors with equally good title-deeds appear on the scene, and the position becomes highly complicated. To obviate this the Russians contract with the small local officials to get all the land they want in a particular district for a lump sum. The mandarin receives the money and may or may not hand it over to the owners of the soil. That is his business, say the Russians. If the peasants are cheated they naturally consider themselves wronged, and equally naturally they set it down to the debit of the foreigner that the transaction was ever initiated.

The interpreters and go-betweens are also a continual source of trouble both to their Russian employers and to the native official and lower

classes. They insist on exorbitant "squeezes," and, protected by the prestige and power of their foreign masters, bully all with whom they come into contact. On the other hand, once they have got the money, the mandarins, who never welcome the advent of foreign enterprise or control in any shape or form, encourage the popular idea that the railway will be disastrous to the Chinese, and only a first step to the Russification of the entire country.

These are some of the obstacles which beset concessions, and they are as a rule inherent in every similar undertaking. But by tact, trouble and fair treatment they can certainly be surmounted. The Imperial Chinese Railway, which ran from Newchwang to Peking, quite succeeded in conciliating public opinion, and was up to the time of the Boxer rebellion really looked upon by the native population along its course as a benefit and a distinction to their provinces. The European superintendents and managers were respected and liked as much as any foreigners can be, and the good sense of having Cantonese in the smaller positions of trust and profit, instead of local men, was fully recognised by every one concerned. That matters took a different turn in Manchuria must be set down firstly to the fact that the people themselves, and notably the Shantung coolies who were employed in large bodies, are more inclined to be turbulent than the inhabitants of Chili, and secondly to the arbitrary treatment they no doubt experienced.

To criticise methods is perhaps invidious, and there

is no doubt that in Asia fear is the father of peace. But the question seems rather to be whether fear is better inculcated by passive strength or by active force. The English prefer "moral effect." It is certainly the right method in theory, but it remains to be seen whether the Chinese are sufficiently civilised to appreciate it at its full value in practice.

As we approached Kirin the scenery became much wilder, the hills more lofty, and the forests more dense, while hours would go by without our passing even a cottage. The inns were poor and dirty, but the people always friendly, civil, and cheerful, while the prices were wonderfully low even for China. At Kirin I stayed several days with the Presbyterian missionaries, always the hospitable hosts of the traveller whatever his religion or race.

There is here an interesting Government arsenal, where the Chinese were mainly occupied in making native gingalls, the big smooth-bored blunderbusses which take three men to carry and to shoot. The Tartar General had recently recommended to the Throne that the manufacture of European firearms should be discontinued and that the army should revert to the bows and arrows of mediæval Cathay (which are still used, at any rate for ceremonial purposes, by the Imperial Guards at Peking). His suggestion, though not accepted in its entirety, had drawn forth an approving and eulogistic edict on his patriotism and literary eminence, and the gingall was presumably a half-way concession to his ultra-toryism.

In the arsenal I saw eighteen Krupp 12-pounders in clean enough condition, and an assortment of rifles of various patterns, besides a quantity of other war material. Hard by stood the provincial mint, where Kirin dollars are struck, the plant of course being European, but the employés and the management native.

In the way of picturesque buildings there is little to attract in Kirin. The houses are low and the streets boarded over with wood, under which run the sewers—a system not very conducive to sanitation. But the situation of the city among the hills is so salubrious that the death-rate is small and the population generally healthy.

Close by the city wall flows the Sungari River, which rises in the Korean mountains to the south. Beyond Kirin it describes a broad bend to the west, and then goes on to join the Amur in the north-east. It first becomes really navigable here, though only at certain times and for small boats. But the Russians, who had a depôt of two hundred Cossacks to guard their wood yards at Kirin, had just managed to get a small steam launch up from Harbin, a hundred and fifty miles further down stream, and this had aroused considerable interest and speculation among the more progressive Chinese merchants. There is, however, so little water for most of the year between Harbin and Kirin, that for all practical purposes the former may be taken as the real limit for boats of even three feet draught. This is not a matter of the first importance, for Kirin

lies eighty miles away to the east of the line, and it is doubtful whether a branch will be built to it, at any rate for some time. Harbin, the great Russian colony and railway junction that has sprung up in the last two years in the very heart of Manchuria, will without doubt soon attract all the trade and labour of the three provinces, and will supersede both Kirin and the other leading cities.

We crossed the Sungari by a ferry, and continuing north arrived in three days at Asheho. Here at last we were able to get on to a working section of the line, and proceeded next morning to Harbin on a goods truck.

It is not here my intention to describe in detail the Trans-Manchurian Railway, the statistics of which will be found in Appendix C, but a rough idea of its course can be gained from a glance at the map.

Leaving the main Trans-Siberian line at Kaidalovo, in the Trans-Baikal Province, and crossing the river Ingoda, the new railway strikes south-east, and enters Chinese territory near Hailar, whence it runs through the province of Tsitsihar and the outskirts of Mongolia to Harbin on the Sungari. The so-called main line then goes on to Asheho and Ninguta, and re-enters the Russian dominions near Nikolsk in the Primorsk Province, where it joins the existing Ussuri Railway to Vladivostock.

From Harbin another or branch line goes almost due south to Kaiyuan, Mukden, and Newchwang, and thence along the Liaotung Peninsula to Talien-

wan, Dalny, and Port Arthur. The Sungari itself acts as a fourth highway from Harbin up to Khabarovsk on the Amur, so that a huge St. Andrew's Cross has been drawn from corner to corner of Manchuria, with its four extreme points on Russian soil. The centre is at the Harbin junction, destined in the opinion of many to be not only the commercial focus of Manchuria, but also the political and administrative capital of North-Eastern Asia. Already—in two years from the date of its birth, for before that it was a nameless hamlet—it has grown into a thriving town with ten thousand inhabitants, and its population augments every month.

Commodious red brick railway offices, a bank, a club, a public garden, a bandstand, a church, shops and electric light attest the regular and rapid advance of Siberian civilisation. For a mile and a half along the banks of the Sungari extend wharves, workshops and forges, with hundreds of Russian and Chinese artificers employed in them. Forty steel barges and twenty steamers ply up and down the river, and trains are now (1900), though they were not then (Sept. 1899), running through from Vladivostock, and right down to Port Arthur and Peking, leaving only the northern section, which is however the longest and most difficult, remaining to be built in order to establish through connection with Europe.

The track of course is single and roughly laid, the bridges for the most part are temporary wooden structures and the stations are often merely converted huts. The rails, sleepers, girders, locomotives and

corrugated iron plant mostly come from the United States (the Americans being able to compete successfully with the Japanese in laying down material even in Central Manchuria). The rest of the rolling stock and all the skilled labour is Russian, hardly any other foreigners being employed as engineers or surveyors.

The expense and waste along the railway seem needlessly great, as indeed they always do in Siberia. Officials are numerous, highly paid, and not always very competent, and the line is not, according to our standards, a first-class construction. But when that is said the rest is all praise.

A colossal undertaking, worthy of the highest traditions of the Government of the Czar, has been successfully initiated, and is being rapidly brought to a no less successful termination. It deserves, and there is no doubt that it should realise, a prosperity commensurate with its aims. As a civilising power it will do much to develop this vast and fertile portion of China, exploiting its resources and educating its people. As a double link between the continental and maritime possessions of Russia, with a double outlet to the Pacific Ocean and the Yellow Sea, it will thoroughly solidify her position in the east of her enormous empire. Comprehensive in its inception, patient and arduous in its execution, its completion must assuredly give a mighty impetus to the moral and material evolution of Oriental Asia, and no one, however Russophobe, can honestly hesitate to appreciate and sympathise



CROSSING THE RIVER SUGARI.

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with such a magnificent and such a humanising enterprise.

At Harbin I spent a most interesting and pleasant week at the Russo-Chinese Bank. The vice-president of the railway, the chief engineer, and indeed all the authorities afforded me very considerable information and assistance, with of course that charming courtesy and hospitality which the Russians know so well how to extend to their visitors. I also met here another British officer, who had come up from Newchwang by a more westerly route, and was equally impressed by what he had seen on his road. We now arranged to continue our journey together as far as the Amur, and accordingly, by the kindness of our hosts, we were given a passage on one of the steamers that go down the Sungari to Khabarovsk, a distance of 600 miles. This we accomplished in five days. The pace is good, for considerable time is lost in taking in wood. We were however able to travel all night, for as regards lighting and buoying the river is distinctly in advance of the Yangtze, where such things, even under the auspices of the I.M.C., are much inclined to stand still.

The lower basin of the Sungari is a desolate tract of country covered with virgin forests and low hills. Only one town of any size, Sansing, lies on the route, and there are very few villages. On entering the Amur, which marks the Siberian frontier, we parted company, my friend going up the larger river to join the Trans-Siberian Railway

at Stretensk, on his way back to Europe, while I continued down to Khabarovsk, which is the terminus of the line to Vladivostock. The weather remained fine and fairly warm, with a bright sun, though the nights were now getting cold. The journey from Peking had taken seven weeks, and at the beginning of October I found myself once again in the dominions of the Czar, which I had not visited for nearly three years.

CHAPTER V

EASTERN SIBERIA

THE Amur is one of the longest and certainly the most important waterway in Upper Asia. It is called by the Chinese Heilungkiang, or Black Dragon River, and now marks the northern frontier of the Celestial dominions. From Stretensk, its navigable limit in the Trans-Baikal Province, to Nikolaievsk on the Sea of Okhotsk it is 2,000 miles, and for the major part of this distance there are at least seven feet of water for as many months in the year. During the winter the river is ice bound, but its frozen surface supplies a sledge track on which rates of speed can be attained quite as high as those of a steamboat. The mountains that fringe the Amur on either shore have hitherto precluded the construction of any proper roads contiguous to it, and the river itself has in consequence been for centuries the single artery of communication and of commerce between the Pacific seaboard and the rich and fertile regions of Central Siberia. Of its five main tributaries, the Sungari, the Ussuri, the Zea, the Shilka and the

Argun, the first and second are by far the most considerable, the remaining three being, owing to their shallow channels, of comparatively little value.

Khabarovsk, the seat of the Governor-General of Eastern Siberia and the northern terminus of the railway from Vladivostock, is situated on a prominent bluff at the junction of the Amur and the Ussuri, 600 miles from the sea. Despite its site it is a poor enough place, with meagre wharves and scanty shipping. Some of the official buildings however are more pretentious, and in the public garden on the cliffs above the river stands a fine statue of Count Mouravieff Amurski, the Cecil Rhodes of Russia in the East fifty years ago.

The town itself is wild and straggling for the most part, though it has one good straight road. The other tracks run up and down gradients that only a Russian *isvostchick* would attempt. Most of the shops are kept by Chinese, but there is one English and one German firm which supply European articles at moderate prices. Otherwise the luxuries of Khabarovsk are very limited. The Buriats and the Fishskin Tartars, who flock to it from the surrounding countryside, certainly look upon it as the zenith of civilisation and the Valhalla of delight; but the Russians appraise it at its proper value, and do not care to live in it for longer than they are obliged to.

It was with some little difficulty that we found an inn to sleep in, though latterly a quite respectable hotel has sprung up. The train at that time



PEASANTS ON THE RIVER AMUR.

[Face p. 71.]

only went to Vladivostock every other day, and for this reason it was necessary to pass a night in the town, for the boat went some miles further on to the depôt of the Trans-Manchurian Railway Company, in order to take in cargo prior to its return to Harbin.

My servant was very unhappy. He could not talk the language, he was astonished at the prices, and he felt that he did not come out of his bargaining transactions nearly so well as usual. His "face" accordingly suffered, and I think his pocket and his stomach also. "This side Chinees alle same dog," was his first remark. I improved the occasion by a modest but not unfavourable reference to Hongkong, and the comparison I think appealed to him. Having to pay for the use of a samovar was his next trouble. He came to me in great perturbation. "Russian man ask money for hot water. I say, 'No can pay.' He say, 'Must can. Suppose no can pay, no can catch.'"

I explained that that was the custom of the country. He submitted, but later on after considerable cogitation he observed: "This side poor man no can live—expense too great. Anything must pay money."

At Vladivostock he found it much worse. The idea of giving seven dollars a day for a room without food and to have to give "kumshaw" as well, fairly dumbfounded him. On the other hand the high rate of wages aroused his cupidity. Hence there arose in his brain a dim idea of supply and demand,

and of the elements of political economy. His logic was rapid and conclusive: "Suppose common Chinese man come this side, catch a good pay, must large expense, no can profit. Suppose no got a work at all, must die. More better Shanghai side, small pay, small expense. Chinese belong man, no belong dog."

But the autocratic methods and the specious affluence impressed him, and I know he fostered henceforth a secret admiration for the Russians, tempered however by a very wholesome fear.

The journey from Khabarovsk to Vladivostock takes twenty-nine hours, the distance being 480 miles. The train is quite a good one, with a restaurant car and sleeping berths, and the tariff is very reasonable, 17 roubles (34s.) being the first-class fare. The scenery along the route is most attractive. Vistas of splendid trees, broad grassy moorlands with occasional scraps of cultivation, dotted with solitary little homesteads, and behind them all the forest-clad mountains rising to the clear blue sky. Few cattle and fewer human beings are to be seen, but everywhere there is wood and water, and the splendid signs of undeveloped wealth. It recalls the western provinces of Canada more than any other place, and the climate and general conditions of life very much resemble those of that country.

The view as one approaches Vladivostock, justly called the Bosphorus of the East, is really delightful. The land-locked harbour, the blue shining sea and

the green hills beyond form a peaceful background to the bustling little red town below. Only along a few crests does the discerning eye catch a glimpse of those white parapets or black guns which look so little and which mean so much.

Vladivostock, the "Command of the East," is now one of the strongest fortresses in the world. Vast sums have been spent on rendering impregnable a position that is by nature easily defensible. The difficulty of the winter ice has been surmounted by the most powerful types of ice-breaker. A secure harbour for the Imperial Squadron in the Extreme Orient has been constructed, and accommodation for large bodies of troops has been provided on the hills in the rear of the port itself, and at the standing camp of Nikolsk seventy miles inland.

In 1899 the Russian forces in Eastern Asia amounted all told to little over 50,000 men—while the civilian population east of Irkutsk was so small that there were few reserves to draw on in case of emergency. Since the events of last year, however, all this has been changed, and it may now be safely assumed that at least 100,000 regulars and a powerful fleet will be always available to meet the attacks of Japan or of any other nation, whether by land or sea. This is perhaps as it should be, for there is no greater guarantee of permanent peace than the maintenance of an equal balance of power.

As regards its commerce Vladivostock is not advancing quite so rapidly as is generally believed,

and a good deal of the more lucrative and promising trade is firmly established in the hands of foreigners—particularly Americans and Germans. An English firm collects and sells excellent furs. There are considerable colonies of Koreans and of Chinese in the city, but these are mainly engaged in small retail business or as coolies. The European immigrants, mainly from Little Russia, settle to a large extent in the country on Cossack tenure, and do not show any remarkable energy or progress. Timber felling and mining occupy them most, for agriculture or cattle rearing, though very necessary, do not return sufficiently high profits to attract the avaricious *mujik*. So much so is this the case that going along the Amur one finds that both corn and sheep have to be imported from Central Siberia or even from Russia in Europe to meet the requirements of a population that is too lazy to feed itself.

Political ideas, local self-government and elemental democracy play a much more prominent part in these regions than they do west of the Urals, and the merits of a Governor-General, the efficiency of a battalion, or even a Ukase of the Emperor, are frequently discussed in the native press or in the drawing room with a freedom that would astonish and terrify a denizen of St. Petersburg or Moscow.

I stayed some days in Vladivostock, where the United States Consular Agent took me round and showed me the sights. One of the most interesting episodes was a regatta, the races being between the cutters of the various Russian battleships and

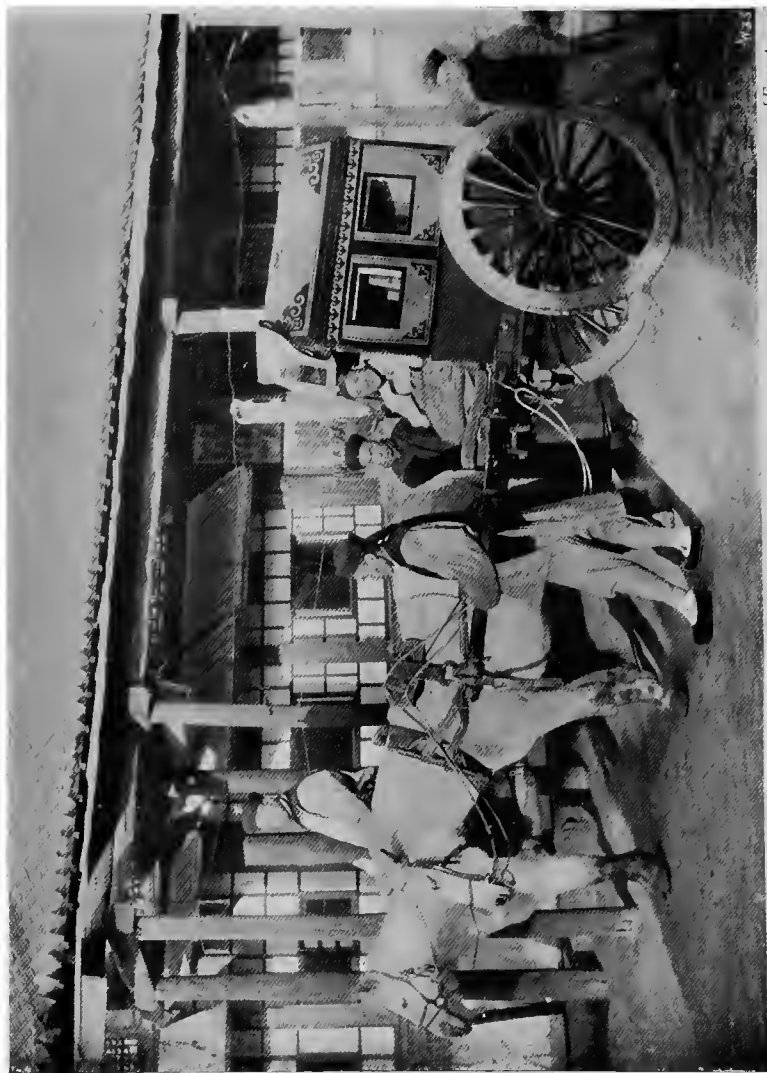
cruisers in harbour. The rowing does not at all correspond with what one is taught at Eton, as the men "hoick" tremendously and pull a very short stroke. Nor do the sailors seem to make anything like the pace of our English bluejackets. Viewed, however, on a bright day from the deck of a big iron-clad, with the pleasant accompaniment of ladies' society, a band and the inevitable champagne, it was quite an attractive entertainment.

I had now determined to follow the old land road from Vladivostock down the eastern shore of the Korean Peninsula, as it had been but little travelled of late and promised to afford information on several questions of political and commercial interest. I accordingly armed myself with an Imperial *pada-rojna*, or posting order, which was to carry me the eighty odd miles to the frontier; with a Korean passport which turned out to be as valueless as the paper it was written on; and with a Korean myrmidon who professed to speak his own, the Chinese and the Russian languages, and to be the soul of honesty. The choice of this gentleman (who discharged the combined duties of interpreter and groom) I had left to my Chinese servant, as otherwise I knew that there would be internal discord as soon as we were started. But my foresight was of no avail. My servant introduced him to me with the following character: "This Kowli man belong very bad man—I very fear must steal, must drink. Alle same other man no can catch." So we had to be satisfied with him, and though he came well up to my

man's expectations he certainly had a hard time, and therefore I am not disposed to blame him too much for his venial offences. He must have been a past master in "negotiation" if he really got round my Chinese servant, and if so he fully deserved the small profits he made. He always had to bear the brunt of the hard words of the Korean local officials, which we did not understand, and in addition our own vituperation, which we took care he did.

Having bought a large assortment of provisions, and procured a supply of dollars from the bank, we started on October 10th. A steamboat took us across the bay to the opposite shore early one autumn morning. Disembarking there at a rude jetty we found a country cart waiting, and in this we drove at a jolting trot to the nearest posting house. There we got two *tarantasses*, the four-wheeled vehicles that correspond in idea to an old English post-chaise without springs, and in these we started for Novokievsk. One night on the road brought us to this town, which is the principal Russian outpost on the Korean and Chinese frontiers and lies at the head of Possiet Bay. It has a permanent garrison of 5,000 troops, including two batteries of field artillery, and possesses the regular red brick buildings surrounded by dirty native huts. Otherwise it is peculiarly uninteresting.

All along the coast there are little settlements of Korean colonists from over the border, who have come in to cultivate the land and under Russian



CHINESE CART.

rule are progressing towards comparative civilisation. They are quiet and well behaved people and not a few have adopted the Orthodox faith, although very little proselytising is done by the Russian priests.

Intermarriage goes on to a considerable extent, and the Eurasian offspring almost invariably follow the customs of their European parents and become in the next generation regular Russians.

From Novokievsk the post route goes forty miles further on to Hunchun, the Chinese frontier town, where it finishes, and the traveller is then relegated to the usual Manchurian road. In the Korean direction, however, only a track leads over the plain to the river Tumen, which marks the boundary of the Hermit Kingdom. A narrow strip of Chinese territory intervenes between Novokievsk and Kyong Heung, the Korean outpost. This terminates about fourteen miles from the sea, and for the remaining distance the Russian and Korean frontiers march together.

Without much difficulty we managed to hire a native cart at Novokievsk to take us as far as the Tumen, at which we arrived next day, after passing the Chinese village of Yinza. Here a fair and a theatre were in full swing, the latter doing most business. It had been going on for three or four days, and every one who could had come in to see it. A high open stage is erected in the main street, and on it the performers, all men and boys, strut about dressed in fantastic clothes and ranting in a conventional falsetto. A hideous cacophony of

drums and cymbals supplies the place of an orchestra. The plays are, as a rule, more or less historical, and the acting at any rate is usually decent, though the dialogue is frequently the reverse. The Imperial troops, who are generally a leading feature, are also always the victors in their fights with the rebels—a noteworthy change from to-day.

Close beyond Yinza we came to the river Tumen, a broad and swift current flowing down through wild gorges to the Sea of Japan.

Here there was no ferry of any kind and apparently no boat either, so for a long time we were delayed. At last, however, my servant discovered a very small fishing sampan on which we piled the baggage, and crowding in at considerable risk ourselves we rowed across to the opposite shore, where we landed about half a mile from Kyong Heung. Here again there was no means of transport for getting from the river bank to the town, so that the Korean factotum, who looked peculiarly dirty and slovenly that day, had to be sent up to hire horses.

He returned after an hour with the news that there were no horses or ponies at that moment in Kyong Heung, but that some oxen were shortly expected in from ploughing and that they would then come down and assist us. This they eventually did, but as they lacked saddles a great deal more time was lost in tying the baggage on to their backs. We did at last manage it however, and arrived at the house which "took in strangers"

just at nightfall, having spent the whole day in traversing a distance of barely ten miles.

None of the inhabitants understood any language but that of Korea, and I now discovered that my interpreter only knew about twenty Chinese and ten Russian words, so that things generally looked neither bright nor promising.

The so-called mandarin of the place sent round his compliments with a message to say that there were no horses and no road to the south, that no one ever came that way, and that he had received no news of our coming. Also that he strongly advised us to go back, as the country was "disturbed," and travelling for foreigners was dangerous.

These were, of course, the ordinary excuses of the listless or anti-foreign official, and we treated them as such. Sure enough next morning there appeared pack horses, a road and a detachment of Korean troops, who undertook to escort and protect us (for a consideration) from Kyong Heung to the next Fu. So without further ado we left the straggling collection of mud-roofed huts and crumbling stone walls that constituted the city, and commenced our journey in a new country, little guessing at the many tedious obstacles we should have to surmount before we finally reached its capital.

CHAPTER VI

THE KOREAN LITTORAL

WE struck inland at once, and began to climb the foot-hills that form the outskirts of the huge chain of the Changpeishan, or Long White Mountains. This range separates Korea from Manchuria, and from its centre rise the two great rivers of Yalu and Tumen, the former flowing west to the Gulf of Pechili, and the latter east to the Sea of Japan.

The weather now grew suddenly colder, and on the second day's march we had a heavy fall of snow. The mule tracks we were following became almost impassable, frozen slides in the morning or evening and slushy mud streams in the middle of the day. Hurricanes burst on us as we crossed the uplands, with accompaniments of blinding sleet and tearing wind, attaining on one occasion such violence that we were obliged to take shelter in a hut and give up all progress for the day.

There seemed to be no inns and no food, for the invariable answer to all our questions was the single word "Opuso," which means "There is not."

At first we found it very difficult to get on with

the people ; probably chiefly through our own misunderstanding of their ways and language. But as time went on, and we got accustomed to Korean methods, this was remedied, and we were soon able to arrive at a *modus vivendi*.

The accommodation in the small villages was far better than in the so-called towns. In the former, where there was no inn, we were generally able to put up in some peasant's cottage, clean and comfortable. In the latter the grooms always managed to go to some filthy, tumble-down tavern, where they found ready forage and stabling for their animals and a sufficiency of drink for themselves. Drink they seemed to look upon as of the first importance, and for any one who spends his life in looking after Korean horseflesh, some stimulant must, I should think, be a necessary "pick-me-up." No description can ever summarise all the remarkable characteristics of the Korean horse, or rather pony. He is, to begin with, only the size of a large Newfoundland dog. He is a past master at buck-jumping. He never fails to kick or bite any human being or other animal that he can reach. This is so much the case that at night he has to be slung up by girths under his body, his hoofs just off the ground, while he spends his time squealing and trying to savage his stable companions, when not drinking the hot, mashed-up bean gruel that forms his only subsistence. In the daytime, however, he is a good beast of burden, and does his thirty miles without a mid-day meal ; but no amount of coaxing ever appears

to change his disposition, and he is always equally delighted to punish the leg that mounts or the hand that feeds him. The European, after a very short time, becomes as wary by bitter experience as the Korean is by birth; the pony therefore has to exercise his temper on his own kind, and this he rarely omits to do. Thus it may be imagined that travelling with a Korean stud is rather lively work.

If the horses are small, however, the oxen are extraordinarily large—the finest cattle of their sort I have ever seen, with the methodical gait of a tortoise and the enormous mild eyes of a Homeric goddess. A white-clad Korean, smoking a long pipe and wearing his ridiculous black gauze top hat tied under his chin with ribbons, when seated astride one of these ponderous monsters, presents a peculiar picture, more resembling some old Japanese ivory carving than a human being of to-day. But it is thoroughly descriptive of “Korean progress.”

Everything dates from several centuries back, and though some of the primitive appliances one sees, notably the self-adjusting wooden ladles that tip the irrigation water down from field to field, are remarkably ingenious, all of them are characteristic of the *leitmotif* of the country, which is saving of labour. This indeed is the keynote of Korean life, to do nothing if possible, but at any rate to do as little as possible. One wonders how the peasant exists, for he never seems to be doing anything beyond eating, smoking or sleeping. Probably the country is so fertile and so little populated that the



KOREAN COOLIES.

[Face p. 82

Golden Age has not yet finished, though the foreign trader with competition and cheap goods is already knocking at the door.

Our journey to the south was divided into two parts; the former over the inland mountains by a rather circuitous route to the town of Kyong Song on the sea coast, and the latter along the littoral to the Treaty Port of Gensan; in all about 500 miles. For half this distance we travelled with post horses, which are supplied at extortionate prices by the villagers and which always cost us an infinity of trouble to procure; but latterly we managed to engage half-a-dozen animals to take us right through to Gensan, when we got on far more comfortably, and strange to say very much quicker. A single instance of "post travelling" will suffice to show its defects.

At Kyong Song, an embattled city with walls of Cyclopean masonry but with dirty streets and tumbledown mud cottages inside, I had sent to the sub-prefect in the ordinary way, asking him to have six horses ready for us next morning. The morning came but no horses. We waited for hours, and again and again we sent to Yamen after Yamen, for there were many (the city being the capital of a province), but with no better result. At last I determined to beard the Governor himself in the sanctity of his palace. Collecting my diminished retinue I went there on my feet, having nothing to ride, and successfully passed the first and second gates, which my Chinese servant with great

presence of mind and considerable though rapid ceremony threw open for me. At the third portal a few flustered attendants, taken by surprise and not quite knowing whether they were dealing with a local revolt or an extraordinary "barbarian visit," endeavoured to stop us, but my man, by a skilful combination of strategy and force, eluded them, and ushered me by a *coup de main* into the high presence of the Governor. I mounted some stone steps, passed under a curtained archway, and found myself in a spacious room raised above the court, on which it looked out by square glass windows.

The mandarin was seated on a cushion on the floor, transacting business, and surrounded by obsequious clerks and officials. He did not get up or ask me to sit down, but my eye lighted on a solitary chair in a corner, and remembering the action of a British Ambassador on a similar occasion I seized it and immediately sat down on it, feeling the relief that I had always hoped to experience as a boy when playing at the exhilarating game of "musical chairs."

The court was aghast at my temerity, but my position was now a very good not to say commanding one, for I was at least two feet higher than anybody else, including the mandarin himself.

For some time nothing was said, and I began to seriously consider whether I should have to emphasise my attitude by sending round for my effects, in order to convince his Excellency that I intended staying in his Yamen until I got my horses. Luckily

this was not needed. With a stolid expression of discontent the Governor at last asked what I wanted (in Korean). My servant answered in very high flown "guan hua" or mandarin talk, in which I was casually alluded to as a "No. 1 button European Viceroy." This had to be translated to the Governor, which obviously annoyed him not a little, as he was conscious of my servant's disdain for an "unlettered mandarin." He heard the tale and frowned, and we saw that somebody would have to suffer, as his wounded dignity could only be soothed by a display of power. Imperative orders were now issued for the instant attendance of the sub-prefect (the official who had omitted to send the horses), and we all awaited him in silence and expectation.

In a very short time we became aware of the presence of an old gentleman outside the windows in the courtyard below. He was surrounded by lictors (with fasces), who were divesting him of his trousers, and he appeared much agitated. From the position he was unwillingly taking up personal chastisement seemed imminent, and accordingly I begged the Governor to administer a reproof and not to "dishonour grey hairs"—at least that was, I believe, the Confucian maxim in which my servant chose to express my sentiments.

The bamboos were already waving in the air, and the poor old gentleman was kowtow-ing vigorously, when the irate Governor was at last moved to mercy. He had impressed both the barbarian and his own court, and was presumably satisfied.

We entered into an amicable conversation, and in ten minutes the horses appeared. There was then an effusive leave-taking; the mandarin being as pleased at my departure as I was. My servant also was delighted with himself. "Must teach Kowli man what for," he remarked as we rode off. Certainly we had had all the honours of the day, though we had lost half of it. But we were not sorry to leave Kyong Song.

We now got into splendidly wooded country watered by numerous streams. Pine, birch, ash, and cedars were thickly scattered over the undulating hills that here fringe the coast, while below stretched a glittering blue expanse of sea, dotted with rocky islands.

The track we followed generally wound over the uplands, within a mile or two of the shore; but now and again it climbed up precipitous cliffs to some queer old shrine with a bell in it, where my people used to kowtow with a great deal of ceremony; and occasionally we found ourselves right down on the sandy beach, or even wading our way through the waves if the tide was flowing in. At Kilju, a recently opened "Treaty Port," where one or two Japanese have set up shops, we were able to hire some ponies to take us right on to Gensan, and so to avoid the everlasting fights with officials over post-horses. Kilju was a dirty little town, and the foreign articles in it were limited to petroleum tins from Philadelphia, which seem to have made their way all over Asia, to a little Russian and

Manchester cloth, and to a larger proportion of white American drill. The Korean dearly loves to array himself in smart-looking clothes and at first sight seems quite clean, but his under garments fully make up for his outward appearance, as they are indescribably filthy ; indeed the average Korean is said to be washed only twice in his life—at his birth and at his death.

The country about here is thick with game, particularly pheasants and wild geese, which the modern Korean "army" endeavours (unsuccessfully) to shoot with their rifles. In the mountains there are tigers, which, with gold and ginseng, may be said to constitute the specialities of Korea. Bread and vegetables are the chief foodstuffs, for rice is not much grown until one gets into the southern provinces, and cotton is also very rarely seen. We came across some near the town of Hamheung, which may now be reckoned as almost within the pale of civilisation, for they were even then extending the telegraph line to it from Gensan. A large fair was in progress there, and though little was being sold when we passed beyond the ordinary local produce the whole countryside seemed to have come in for it. They were very quiet and orderly however, and there was no abuse or shouting or indeed much curiosity manifested as we rode through. The town is picturesquely situated in a ring of green hills with an old Confucian temple perched up above it, and a very long and rickety bridge spans the river outside the walls. Just here

a Korean wedding met us and aroused considerable attention among the natives. The bridegroom, dressed in his best, was riding sedately in front, while the bride, hidden in a hooded cart, lumbered painfully in the rear. Flags and cymbals, but no chair or umbrella as in China, came behind. Chair travelling hardly exists in Korea, and the article used by the mandarins and considered the height of luxury, is an ugly and comfortless affair and lands its occupant, when he is "set down," on the ground itself. In fact the people seem content with very little and altogether there are few signs of wealth to be seen either in the diminutive villages or in the clusters of wattle-roofed cottages that form the towns. There are now no large country houses, and the old *yangban* or landed proprietor seems to have quite disappeared. The mandarins are the only real *yangbans*, for they have kept up the time-honoured custom of "squeezing" that their Chinese traditions have taught them, and have thus acquired some riches and influence.

Along the littoral there is no sea traffic and fishing seems to be hardly recognised as a means of livelihood. One or two badly worked coal shafts afford fuel to the surrounding hamlets and there are in the interior several excellent gold mines, but life on the whole is so easy that there is no need for the strenuous competition and struggle for existence that one continually sees in the crowded provinces of China. The rich man amuses himself by smoking even more and working even less than



KOREAN HUTS.



[Face p. 33.]

KOREAN GOLD MINES.

the ordinary peasant; occasionally he goes out hawking, and no doubt he eats a considerably larger dinner and takes a longer night's rest than other folks. But there the distinction ends. He knows no more as regards outward affairs, he very rarely travels and then not for pleasure, and he is thoroughly destitute of any desire for further knowledge.

Nevertheless Korea is a very interesting land to travel in, if only for its complete isolation from even Asiatic civilisation. Placed as it is on a rocky sea-bound peninsula between the populous and fertile coasts of North China and Japan, it seems remarkable that its inhabitants should have evinced so little activity or initiative in commercial or political development. One would have expected a race of sailors, hardy fisher folk, independent mountaineers or pushing traders. Nothing of the sort has been evolved. Certainly when a few years ago the present monarch, who is a really enlightened ruler, endeavoured to persuade his subjects to cut off their topknots, they responded by a revolution, and in the south there is nearly always an intermittent insurrection going on. But this is nothing more than the passive local resistance to any attempt at a forward policy, the solid hatred of new ideas which appears to be the only positive feeling that animates Korea as a whole. There are at Seoul and in the Treaty Ports numerous missionaries, and they have made quite a fair number of converts. Whether these are capable of fighting

for their religion it is hard to say, and it would be dangerous to risk a forecast after the recent examples of what Christians can do in China. But the prevailing impression in the country and among the people is one of intense inertia, an absolute lack of interest in anything, coupled with a strong distaste for novelty. The contrast between the Koreans and the Chinese, and still more the Japanese, who are rapidly establishing themselves in the Korean sea-ports, is all the more vivid, and at the present rate it seems probable that the natives will very soon be reduced to the position of "hewers of wood and drawers of water," and that the trade and administration, if not the possession of their kingdom, will entirely leave their hands. The commercial interests already are and appear likely to remain with the Japanese. The political future is another question, as there is more than one nation concerned in it. For the present the Japanese also have the preponderance here, though they are not popular with the Koreans ; but Russia and possibly a reformed China are elements that will have to be taken into account before a solution is arrived at. This solution may be nearer than is believed ; for though passive resistance and national inanition are difficult forces to contend against in a huge empire like China, they are quickly swamped and overcome in a small country like Korea.

We pursued our way from Hamheung without any further exciting incidents and at length arrived after a long three weeks' journey at Gensan, the

eastern Treaty Port. Here we again enjoyed the cheerful sight of a European and heard some news of the "barbarian West." I was very glad to get to some more or less civilised place as the supply of money I had taken with me from Vladivostock was quite finished. In Korea there are no silver dollars, though Japanese yen, which we had been carrying, are taken in some of the larger places. There is also apparently no sycee for ordinary currency, so nearly everything has to be done by means of cumbrous strings of cash, a few pounds' worth of which makes a mule's load.

My clothes were also giving out. As a rule I wore field boots and breeches with a flannel shirt and Norfolk jacket, and a sun helmet if it was necessary. But after continuous travelling through snow and rain these things soon get worn out, and, as may be easily imagined, they cannot be replaced in Korea. So we were not at all sorry to get to a Treaty Port at last. As the winter was now beginning, and as we still had 170 miles before us to get to Seoul, the capital of the kingdom, I decided to waste no more time but to hurry on there at once.

CHAPTER VII

SEOUL

THERE is little to detain the traveller in Gensan though it is a flourishing town (for Korea) with a population of 12,000 souls and a thriving Japanese colony. Separated from it by a rocky headland is the famous Port Lazaref, which was at one time chosen as the prospective terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway, but which is now only a deserted roadstead. There are few Chinese to be met with here or anywhere along the eastern coast of Korea, though plenty of Japanese, and it is worth noting that they both make use of the English language for communication between themselves and with the Koreans. As there is a certain amount of racial antipathy already existing among the three nations, their commercial transactions not infrequently evoke an English which would certainly not pass in a London merchant's office.

Our first march from Gensan brought us to the famous monastery of Sakwansa in the hilly Anbyon district. It was formerly the home of the reigning dynasty, and has always been one of the most

sacred spots in the kingdom. Approached at night through dark groves of pines and long vistas of stone arches or "arrow gates," with hideous red devil posts and sculptured tablets of dead abbots on either side, the effect it produces, even on the sceptical foreigner, is weird and awe inspiring. The Korean it need hardly be said regards it much as he would an entry to the infernal regions.

We were hospitably entertained here by the monks, who make a practice of receiving guests that can pay, and were comfortably lodged, the lattice-work chambers and clean cane matting looking more Japanese than Korean. A good many laymen are attached to the monastery, which is territorially rich, and these are generally employed in felling timber, cultivation, and similar pursuits. The abbot, who is the head of the foundation, is a very important personage, both as a prelate and a landed magnate. His business is mainly secular, but the priests, with their shaven crowns and yellow Buddhist robes, are supposed to be continually occupied with their devotions, and all night one certainly hears their gongs and drums beating and their lugubrious chants being intoned. The architecture of the various edifices is of the regular tent-roofed pattern, and there are very few relics to be seen of much value or sanctity, but the *tout ensemble* of the queer old pile up under the cliffs, living its own isolated life for century after century uninterrupted by the march of time, is very impressive.

From here the road to Seoul strikes over the

dividing range of the peninsula, leaving the Diamond Mountains away to the left. We now threaded our way along narrow ravines and up rocky torrent beds until we eventually reached a broad plateau. This marks the watershed, and for two days we crossed a barren plain with hardly any inhabitants. Descending along the winding river of the Han whose clear and limpid waters run out to the Yellow Sea at Chemulpo, we then soon entered the fertile plain that surrounds the capital, where we arrived on the sixth day out from Gensan. Here Mr. Jordan, H.M. Chargé d'Affaires, very kindly put me up at the Legation and acted as my guide, philosopher, and friend during my stay in Seoul. I remained here for ten days, and was fully occupied in seeing the place and the people, and in completing some reports that I had to write.

The city of Seoul, which has a population of nearly a quarter of a million souls and is three times as large as any other town in the kingdom, is also by far the most important and entertaining to visit. It bears in some degree the same relation to Korea that Paris does to France, for though the voice of its people does not represent the voice of the entire country, it is much the loudest. Here if anywhere can be found some nascent germs of progress, and indeed the "independent party" is here quite a factor in Korean politics, occasionally holding mass meetings, at which "parliamentary representation and constitutional government" are advocated. The citizens are sometimes, though not always,



Face p. 95.

STREET IN SEOUL.

“appeased” by the Emperor’s “personal eloquence,” and when this fails they are “dispersed” by the “household troops.” But the progress of Seoul is not only abstract, for its streets show material evidence of advance, and compare very favourably with those of Peking. They are wide and fairly clean, not encumbered by booths and tents, and boast of an electric tram, sentries in foreign uniform, gas lamps, and even a railway station. The better-class shops are in the hands of Chinese or Japanese, chiefly the latter, and are creditably managed, while the palaces, which are picturesque and rather gorgeous buildings, are open to visitors, and even the Court itself is more or less accessible.

Thus it will be seen that there are many points in which Seoul has outstripped Peking, and though the influence of Japan and the pressure of outside Powers have had much to do with this, much is also due to the enlightened ideas of the monarch who at present sits on the throne, and to those of several of his leading ministers.

I had the good fortune while at Seoul to be received in audience by His Majesty, who seemed a most pleasant and sensible gentleman. He was beautifully dressed in yellow satin, his son the Crown Prince being in red, and both wore the orthodox gauze cap and topknot, the latter decorated with a jewel of priceless value. The audience was chiefly confined to the ordinary inquiries about travelling and the like, and there was little opportunity of discussing wider subjects. But the

Emperor of Korea is in fact a man who has seized his opportunity and endeavours to march with the times. Many of his various projects, such as electric lighting, sericulture and model farming, have not succeeded, but he possesses the real spirit of progress, and in the thirty-six years of his reign has survived many political changes, which he has always tried to turn to the advantage of his people. Although he is still to a great extent the Oriental potentate, with absolute control over the national finances, administration and diplomacy, he is well aware of the utility of Western forms of government, and he has, by an able choice of ministers, many of whom have benefited by a European education, applied much sound reorganisation to his own land.

The then Foreign Minister, Mr. Pak, is also a cultivated and liberal-minded man, and in an interview that I had with him he showed that he also had the good of his country well at heart. International rivalry was at that time chiefly concerned with the concessions of various gold mines, and Mr. Pak was bringing his powers of finesse into play in such a way as to ensure that the mineral wealth of Korea should be exploited as much for the profit of the native shareholders as for that of the foreign companies. As may be imagined there is a good deal of intrigue in a small Court like that of Seoul, and in its Liliputian way it is no bad school for a budding diplomatist. The leading feature of internal policy just then was the army, for the Russian

drill instructors had been quite recently sent back home, and the 5,000 Korean "foreign drilled" troops were exulting in their newly acquired independence. The Emperor, in view of past revolts and possibly of future contingencies, continually keeps a cordon of outposts and picquets round his palace, so much so that the life of the Korean foot-guardsmen seems to be made up of eternal sentry-go. However he is well clothed and paid, and no doubt considers his profession as a good business from a pecuniary point of view. His main duties seem to consist in keeping back crowds of townsfolk who try to see the monthly processions called "kurbangs," the only episodes of excitement that occur regularly, and on which the men of Seoul are forbidden to gaze. For this task the soldier is provided with two classes of bayonet, which fix on to his old Berdan rifle. The one is rather short, and is for summer use only, but the other is much longer and is for service in the winter, when the Koreans wear more and thicker clothes and are presumably better protected against cold steel.

The drill of the troops is not so bad as might be expected, but the officers are very amusing for they have to be supported on their horses by numerous attendants, rather, we were informed, on account of their dignity than from an inability to ride. They appear in great force at the processions alluded to above, when the Emperor leaves the city to visit tombs or to sacrifice. On his exit or return long cavalcades of priests in yellow, ancient officials in

fantastic hats, generals in glittering uniforms, a field battery, and a huge empty state chair "to deceive assassins" precede or surround him. If it is late at night he is escorted by troops bearing torches, the whole effect producing a most striking scene as it enters the gates of the palace.

The actual building inhabited by the Emperor is not shown to the ordinary sightseer, but the two old palaces, which are very beautiful specimens of Chinese architecture and decoration, can be viewed and well repay a visit. The fretted roofs and gorgeously painted walls, the lacquered panels, the rose gardens and lattice-worked windows, and the massive stone monsters at the gateways to some extent recall Peking, except that they are on a smaller and also a much cleaner scale. There is also a remarkable old marble pagoda, one of the best monuments in the kingdom. Everything regal—or rather, as one should now say, imperial—is borrowed from the Chinese Court, and until 1896 when the present occupant of the Korean throne renounced the suzerainty of China, a yearly embassy was sent by the Hwangti from Peking to receive his vassal's homage. This mission was always met by the King of Korea at a rock-hewn causeway outside the western gate of Seoul, called the Peking Pass, and a votive arch has now been set up near it by the Korean radicals to commemorate their emancipation.

There is also something of the modern idea to be seen in and around the city. The Legations



MARBLE PAGODA NEAR SEOUL.

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are of course all the conventional red brick class of building, and the Emperor is now erecting himself a new and rather rococo palace on similar lines in the foreign quarter. Hard by the little electric train with a great deal of bell-ringing bangs and clanks its way in through the old stone wall, carrying semi-Europeanised Japanese and their model soldiers sitting next to wondering Korean peasants, and presenting another sign of the old order changing.

Perhaps the most important feature of novelty is the railway, which was then (November, 1899) almost completed, with the exception of a bridge across the Han, just outside the city. It is a forty-mile single line from Seoul to Chemulpo, the Western Treaty Port, and was originally laid down by an American company. Subsequently the Japanese acquired the concession, and under their management the line is now a thriving concern. On the termination of my visit at Seoul I went down by it to Chemulpo, where I had to spend several days waiting for an uncertain steamer that was to take me to Japan.

The port of Chemulpo, which is said to have a population of 22,000 including a large Japanese and a smaller Chinese colony, has a poor and exposed roadstead, but still it is the chief outlet and entry for the commerce of the country. All loading and transport is done by human labour, and it is a very strange sight to see the Korean coolies, who are renowned for their strength, carrying

gigantic bales of cotton on their backs with apparently the greatest of ease. The boat work is mainly done by the Japanese, as is the retail shop business. Indeed nearly all the trade is in their hands. There is a British Consul, who very kindly asked me to his charming house, a British merchant, and several missionaries, but otherwise we are not very much to the fore. The Americans, Germans, Russians and French are also represented, and the first and second of these are making considerable commercial progress by carefully pushing their goods and generally fostering their trade wherever the chance occurs. But as yet the figures attained are not very large.

A day or two in Chemulpo suffice the ordinary European, and when the *Owari Maru* steamer of 800 tons, flying the flag of the Nippon Yusen Kaisha—the chief Japanese steamship company—hove into sight one morning, I did not delay in taking my passage on her for Nagasaki. She was not remarkably steady, though we were told she was a very good sea-boat whatever that may be, but luckily the weather remained reasonably calm during the voyage, so she was not put to the test. The Japanese skippers however are first-class navigators and the sailors really “handy men,” and as a rule one travels quickly, cheaply and comfortably in any vessels of the big steamship lines. This was a coasting steamer, and so we did not go direct, but otherwise everything went well.

It takes four days to get to Japan by this route,

sailing down among the rocky islets that fringe the western littoral. We called at the small town of Mokpo, newly opened to trade, then at Fusan, the chief Treaty Port in the south and forty miles away from Masampo, which is said to be the best harbour in all the Far East, and finally at Tsusima, an island belonging to Japan. From here it is less than a hundred miles across to Nagasaki.

Fusan, which I again visited on my way home nine months later, is a bigger and more populous place than Chemulpo, but here again everything of value is in the hands of the Japanese, and the Korean seems to be rapidly being ousted from his hereditary possessions. Indeed the colonising and commercial powers of Japan obtrude themselves on one's eye all over Korea, the more so as they are in such striking contrast to the extraordinary apathy of the Korean himself. The only exception is the solitary instance of the capital, where the influence of the Foreign Legations and the reforming spirit of the Emperor have effected some changes. But even with the best intentions and the most fortunate results it seems clear that Korea is not for the Koreans, though whom it is for is not so easy to say. Mountainous and sea-bound it has produced a people with neither energy nor courage. Possessing neither literature nor art it has given nothing to the outside world, while the little civilisation that it can show came to it a thousand years ago from the Chinese.

Rightly was it called the Hermit Kingdom, for

until twenty years ago it was as unknown to Europe as the Steppes of Tibet are to-day, and it hoped no doubt to go on living down the ages in similar isolation. But suddenly it found itself crushed between the upper and the nether millstone, the very spot round or on which the mighty sea and land Powers of Eastern Asia wished to fight their battles. Of this the Koreans are already dimly aware, but in their case forewarned is not forearmed, for they have got to deal with neighbours so far superior to them in strength, whether moral or material, that they can only look to an altruistic diplomacy or to the providence of events to save them from national annihilation.

CHAPTER VIII

UP THE YANGTZE KIANG

THE month of December I passed in Japan, visiting the regulation sights and seeing at Tokio something of the political and social life there. I do not however propose to endeavour here to describe a country or a people of which I know nothing new, and where I passed such a short time.

At the end of the year 1899 I crossed over from Nagasaki to Shanghai and there spent another month at the hospitable house of Mr. Warren, who was then acting as Consul-General. Several interesting people were passing through at the time, and what with hearing the opinions of Taotais and travelling Members of Parliament, syndicate promoters and Indian officers, one got an idea of the variety of views that China can present under different aspects. Shanghai is also the best place to get some idea of the enormous volume of British and foreign trade in the Far East. With its long lines of wharves and go-downs, its well laid out streets, gardens and embankments, and its numerous public buildings, all due to European initiative, it

presents a striking object lesson of order and power. But once past the gates of the native city one is back again in the very vortex of Asiatic life, among a seething crowd that might be a thousand miles away from any Western influence at all.

The weather in Shanghai was at first fairly warm, but it very soon changed and we had snow and ice, an unusual phenomena in these latitudes, so that Christmas quite reminded us of home. There was also plenty of good cheer and gaiety, for the "Model Settlement" grows every year larger and more luxurious, and it will take time and strenuous competition before it is ousted from its position of the commercial metropolis of the Extreme Orient.

It was rather too cold for much in the way of excursions, but I managed to pay a visit to Hangchow, the capital of the adjoining province of Chekiang and one of the most populous and richest places in the Empire. The route is by the Suchow and Grand Canals, and nowadays one is able to go in a comfortable little houseboat towed by a Japanese steam launch, a very different method of progress from the old times when it was a case of sailing or tracking and took three or four days.

Hangchow is one of the new Treaty Ports, and a foreign settlement has been laid out there, though as yet there is very little on it beyond the Customs buildings. As it is seven miles away from the native city it is not so advantageous a site as it might be, especially as the terminal tax or octroi, called "loti shui," has to be paid by Chinese-owned

goods entering the gates, though likin is of course avoided.

Since the Anglo-German loan of 1898 the likin (native Customs) of several of the ports in these provinces have been hypothecated to the Imperial Maritime Customs, and though so far there has hardly been time to see whether the new arrangement will act well, everything is being done to ensure it. The local authorities are naturally not particularly keen about assisting in the collection of revenues that used to go into their own pockets but will now be paid over to Peking, or, as they say, to the foreigners. On the other hand the native merchants and townsfolk generally along the trade routes are already discovering that the exactions now are much less than they used to be and not nearly so arbitrary. From the economical standpoint it need hardly be said that under the new system a far greater sum is produced both for Imperial and for provincial needs than ever was before—the invariable difference between a speculating Chinese and an honest European staff.

Hangchow is famous for its silk and for its equinoctial “bore” or inrush of water from the sea. It suffered considerably during the Taiping rebellion but is already recuperating from its losses and has now a population of over 800,000. The people, like most though not all of the inhabitants of the Chinese littoral, are inclined to be soft, but they have the commercial spirit well developed and still outrival the Japanese in the manufacture of most

articles of local consumption. So far there are no foreigners in the city with the exception of a few missionary doctors and the British Consul. But in a few years Hangchow will probably see considerable changes for the better, especially if any of the railway schemes for connecting it with Shanghai or Canton succeed.

Outside the walls there are one or two rather pretty pagodas and the whole aspect of the country at that time of year, intersected with frozen canals and buried in white snow, was quite picturesque. The Chinaman however does not relish the cold, and though at the beginning of winter he always takes his warm clothes out of pawn and religiously puts them all on, he never seems really happy or comfortable in them, and no doubt ardently awaits the return of spring, when he can revert to his simple Adamite costume and at the same time raise some more cash.

When I got back to Shanghai I found that some letters and despatches I had been expecting had at last arrived from Peking (which being ice-bound at this time of year suffers from a very intermittent post). It was accordingly possible to make a start again, this time for the Far West.

The first part of the journey for any one going in this direction is cut and dried. It is of course steamer up the Yangtze Kiang, at any rate as far as Hankow, and as there are excellent boats leaving every night no delay was necessary. My personnel was the same as before, except for a new second

man, the Korean underling having been discarded in Seoul. The usual supply of stores was laid in and also some fresh books, as there was likely to be a good deal of boat travelling at first.

We made the regular run up the river, passing the Treaty Ports of Chinkiang, Nanking, Wuhu, and Kiukiang. None of these towns are of much interest except Nanking, and that is now bereft of its porcelain pagoda and of much of its pristine splendour. It has however some fine old stone tombs of bygone dynasties, to which the centuries have wrought little harm, and which well repay a visit.

On the fourth day we arrived at Hankow, which I had last seen in May. The appearance of a port on the River Yangtze in summer and in winter is very different. The long bund which eight months before had had the water almost flush with its coping, was now a tall bare expanse of mud and stone work, towering thirty feet above us. Much less trade was going on also than in May when the tea season is in full swing, and of course the climate was materially altered.

During my stay at Hankow this time I had occasion to visit the Viceroy Chang-chi-tung, who was mentioned before in Chapter II. I found him quite as clever and as sensible as I had expected, though he did not impress me as being either so strong a ruler or so pro-British as is usually believed. He is however a fine old gentleman, very courteous and with a considerable sense of humour, and he certainly possesses the art of choosing most capable subordinates. He is supposed to be very

honest and (in consequence) very poor, though he had on when he received us a sable cloak that would have made the mouth of a Moscow merchant water.

There is no doubt that he recognises the general utility and necessity of European reform in China. He only wishes it to be for China and not for Europe, and for this who can blame him? Patriotism is not a common virtue among the Celestials and his is all the more to his credit, while his correct and laudable attitude during the recent troubles has justified the confidence that was placed in him.

There was little else to detain me in Hankow, and by the kindness of the British Admiral I was soon enabled to proceed to Yochow, the new Treaty Port in Hunan and the next stage of my journey, on board a British gunboat—one of those which do the patrol service up and down the river and protect “British interests.” This was H.M.S. *Snipe* (Lieut. and Comdr. Oldham, R.N.), which draws about two feet and steams twelve knots. Although she is of a rather impracticable pattern her gallant skipper made the most of her, and we did not waste any time in getting up to Yochow, which lies at the entrance to the Tungting Lake. It had been my intention from here to get across to Changsha and thence to march through the western hills of Hunan to Chungking in Szechuan. But fate decreed otherwise, and I found myself compelled to go on up the main river by the ordinary route to Ichang.



BRITISH GUNBOAT.



CHINESE GUNBOATS.

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While we lay off Yochow the Taotai, a very pleasant individual, entertained us at a magnificent banquet, having previously boarded us with flags and tomtoms and been treated to the regulation brand of champagne.

Amongst other visitors we also had the pleasure of receiving a "Naval Lieut.-Colonel," whatever that may be. He was a delightful person and had evidently somewhere in the course of his duties on land or at sea acquired some knowledge of Western ways, for he heralded his arrival by a large double visiting card inscribed in both Chinese and English.

It was a beautiful document, a little florid and detailed perhaps in diction, but otherwise an artistic and inspiring composition. I subjoin it in full, only changing the gentleman's name for sentimental reasons.

Ta Hun Lung, Lan Poo (friendly calling),
General (Imperial title),
Colonel of a Regiment,
(Will soon be ordered by an Imperial Edict),
Wise and Brave Hero
(Admired by an Imperial Edict),
Temporarily being the Naval Lieut.-Colonel
of Yangtze Kiang.
Lived Yochow, Hunan.

This I think was hardly equalled by a Servian gentleman travelling in Belgium who carried a piece of pasteboard embellished with the words

"Voyageur autour du monde sans le sou."

Perhaps some day the two may meet in the

Yemen or the Sandwich Islands, when they will no doubt exchange their cards.

The country from Yochow on to Ichang is excessively flat and monotonous, and there is only one town of any size, Kingchow, where there is a large Manchu colony and a Tartar general. The river winds interminably and has numerous sandbanks, so that progress is both slow and difficult. The riverine districts are fertile, the soil being the regular loess of the Great Plain of China, and it is not until one gets to the borders of the province of Szechuan that the mountains really begin.

When we did eventually arrive at Ichang we found that the fêtes of the Chinese New Year had just commenced, and that there was no chance of getting a junk to take us on to Chungking for several days. Every one, even the Consul's dog coolie whose honorarium was only four dollars a month, manages on this occasion to appear dressed in silk, and there was a lavish display of lanterns, fire crackers, bunting and gaudy signboards over boats and houses. Three days were consumed in negotiations, and then at last a bargain was struck and we started off for Chungking in a small two-roomed native junk. The festivities had evidently begun to pall more on the pockets than on the constitutions of my crew, for they worked astonishingly well all along though they were always in a state of bankruptcy.

The journey up the Yangtze gorges has been frequently described by those who have done it





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CHINESE CROWD ON BANKS OF YANGTZE.

more than once. I need not quote Mr. Little, Mrs. Bishop and many others. There was nothing in our experiences particularly new, except that we did the 400 miles in the very good time of twenty days and only paid the comparatively reasonable sum of 120 taels—all of which was due to the kind offices of H.M. Consul at the point of departure. We were escorted by a Chinese Government "red boat," a small fast cutter, manned by five soldiers, which helped us in many ways, notably in securing us a right of way in front of other native craft at the rapids. These "red boats" are scattered up and down the river and do good salvage and life-saving work besides carrying despatches and "pursuing pirates."

The rapids form the really exciting part of the journey as they are at times exceedingly difficult, not to say dangerous. The junk has to be tracked or towed over them by main force, and whereas ordinarily my crew consisted of only sixteen men, at a rapid it had to be augmented by as many as fifty to eighty more, all pulling and yelling as the boat tossed on the waves behind them. These extra men live in huts on the banks at the various points where they are required, and exist on the small pittances they receive from each boat that comes along.

The scene, however often it be repeated, is always exhilarating. At big rapids (*ta-tan*) I always used to stay on the boat, that being the "post of danger" and also the surest way of keeping

with one's baggage, in case, as not infrequently happens, the ropes break and the boat is whirled in an instant a mile or more down the river. At the bows stood the *ta-kung* or "great work" man with a long sweep, and by him was a wild, half naked savage with a pole for fending us off the rocks. These two screamed hoarsely all the time, mainly at each other. Halfway up the mast I sat myself, though I was more generally dangling over the water, when the boat, as it frequently did, heeled over and tried to capsize. Right aft on the poop stood the owner or *laoban* steering, weeping and ejaculating vows for the safety of his craft. On the roof sat huddled up the boat's cook with a raucous drum, which he beat madly from time to time "pour encourageur les autres."

On the bank were the fifty or more trackers, straining every nerve at the ropes, with their backs bowed and their heads almost on the ground. Below us the waters raced and tore past, swirling in huge eddies round the half sunken rocks and making a deafening noise. Occasionally there would be a shout from far up the river, and then we would suddenly see a long down-stream boat shoot past us, its mast unshipped and its crew rowing for all they were worth to keep some command over the current.

For the first ten minutes or so we would seem to remain absolutely stationary and then the critical moment would come and we were battling with the

whole force of the river at its strongest point. This would last for perhaps ten minutes more, and then again we suddenly found ourselves in comparatively smooth water and the rapid was passed. This of course is presuming that nothing untoward occurred, for if anything "broke" we were carried in a few seconds far down stream and had to waste hours in painfully working our way back again.

Up the Yangtze Gorges at twenty miles a day is very good going, though to one who has not been there it may not seem so. The labour of poling or tracking is very heavy and almost incessant, for in the narrow winding cañons one cannot profit much by a fair wind. The men have three meals a day, only of rice and vegetables, and some of them smoke opium in the evening, but as a rule they are a decent, hard-working lot and have by no means a particularly pleasant life. Nevertheless they are nearly always in a good temper, ready enough when asked to go on for extra hours, and not given to complaining. With the *laoban* or skipper it is naturally rather different, for he risks his whole livelihood on the venture, and if his boat is wrecked or lost in a rapid all his worldly possessions are gone in a moment.

The one or two small towns on the banks between Ichang and Chungking are none of them very big or imposing, though there are several "famous temples." The country inland is for the most part rocky and poor; what wealth there is being concentrated along the river, which is the only artery of

commerce. The natives are as rule peaceable and friendly and not particularly inquisitive, though apparently they used to be the reverse.

In the fulness of time we arrived at Chungking, the solitary Treaty Port of Szechuan. It is built on the steep left bank of the Yangtze at its confluence with the Kialing, and is after Chentu the largest and richest city in the province. This is saying a good deal, for Szechuan is without doubt the most important province in the Middle Kingdom. It has a population of at least forty-five millions, many authorities say more, and its inhabitants are the most industrious of all the Chinese. In the Red Basin, which is roughly the central part of Szechuan, there is very considerable mineral wealth, and by the genius and labour of the people the soil has been made exceedingly fertile. Tea, silk, opium and cotton are produced in great quantities and exported to the sea-board, while most of the metals of Kuichou and Yunnan, as well as the wool and musk of Tibet, find their way to Chungking or Chentu before being distributed over the rest of China. The fact that the province is remote and isolated from the rest of the Empire, being almost entirely surrounded by mountains and only really approachable by the Yangtze Kiang, has to some extent kept it virgin ground for the outside trade. But the Szechuanese are by no means hostile to foreigners, and with the least energy and care there will be here a brilliant commercial future both for the Chinese and for the European market. During last year two of



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POPPY FIELD (OPTUN).

H.M. gunboats managed to ascend the rapids to Chungking, whence one of them easily got on to Suchow (Suifu) and Kiating, and a regular passenger and goods steamer has now been started by a private company. When proper blasting operations have been executed there is no reason why the existing arduous and expensive navigation should not be materially altered for the better.

The cities in the west of China are quite different from those in the north or south, though of the two they rather resemble the latter. Narrow paved streets, gilded and painted signboards, fat-faced individuals in silk, chairs and coolies instead of donkeys and horses, with a tremendous amount of movement and despatch. Chentu is the best example, and also the most pleasant. Chungking is rather dirty, and is a most awkward place to get about in, being built on the side of a hill. When one is always going up or down slippery and precipitous steps, carried in a gimcrack chair by two tottering dotards, life has its moments of excitement. Once I saw a small mandarin toboggan, chair and all, for some distance down the "Imperial Flight of Felicity," and had I not been entirely wrapt up in my own security as my bearers' feet slid about under them, I should probably have been much amused by his accident. However, he got up unhurt and smiling, though no doubt very angry, and I opined from the peculiar expression of injured innocence on the faces of his coolies that the bamboo was in store for them.

From Chungking I had settled to go on to

Chentu by road. One can of course continue the ascent of the Yangtze and Min rivers by way of Suifu and Kiating almost to the walls of the capital, but it is a long and tedious job and besides we had had quite enough of boat travelling. Going by land one has the advantage of seeing the country, which is always entertaining, and one travels much faster and straighter. Were it a case of going east it would be quite another thing, for the rate of the current makes it possible to travel down stream at an almost incredible speed. The ordinary run down from Chungking to Ichang is five days, and it has even been done in thirty hours by a sampan.

All transport in Szechuan is by coolie, for two reasons. First of all there are a vast amount of irrigation canals, and the ground is very expensive, so that the narrowest possible tracks are made to do duty as paths. Secondly there is very little pasture land, and consequently very few horses. A coolie costs about 400 cash (40 cents or a shilling) a day—this is a high price—and for that he carries his heavy load for thirty miles. Chair-bearers are paid a little more and have an easier job. Both are usually hired *en masse* from one of the hong's or local companies in the cities, and are led by a head man, who is responsible for their conduct. They go the whole journey, and there appears to be no system of relays analogous to that in Southern China.

As I wished to see Tzeliojin, the headquarters of the salt wells district, and also Kiating, where the

white wax and silk trades centre, I had chosen a route by way of these two towns in preference to the direct highroad to Chentu, and the extra time was not lost for both places were highly interesting and well worth seeing.

Travelling in this province is by no means uncomfortable. The inns are spacious and clean, the people are as a rule courteous, the prices are moderate, and the coolies are expeditious. The scenery also is extremely picturesque. Narrow stone paths climbing over wooden heights by flights of hewn steps, stately engraved archways and painted pagodas, half hidden in groves of mulberries and pines, and below the broad valleys chequered with fields of silver, green, and red. Occasionally one comes to some queer old country house, nestled in the cleft of a hill, with a votive pillar or rustic temple up above it, at other times to a crowded little walled town, lined with steaming shops and full of jostling customers and hurrying porters. The irrigation work is marvellous, water being by some extraordinary means conveyed almost everywhere—apparently perfectly regardless of levels. The soil is by nature red sandstone, but many of the fields are either covered by crops or entirely under water, so that very often on surmounting the ridge of a hill the valley beyond appears to be a vast lake.

When we got to Tzeliojin however the landscape was not nearly so attractive. For fifteen miles a single, long, dirty street straggles on, while on

every side rise the scaffoldings of the sulphurous brine wells from which the salt is extracted. Some of them are as much as 2,000 feet deep, and they are worked by a very ingenious pumping arrangement, the windlasses being turned by oxen. The whole business is in the hands of a guild of merchants who pay royalties to the State, salt being an excisable article, and as many as half a million souls are said to live round about and to be employed at the wells. The navvies are rather disposed to be turbulent and rude to strangers, and we had some slight trouble at one place, but for the most part they seem occupied with their own concerns and with laboriously earning their livelihood.

One of the few nuisances is money. On the lower Yangtze and in the best known parts of Southern China, as well as in Manchuria, silver dollars are generally taken and can be exchanged for the ordinary cash strings; but in the lesser known provinces the only currency is sycee. This is ingot silver cut up into "shoes" of various sizes. As the standard of weight and fineness, and also the rate of exchange, varies at nearly every large town the difficulties attending on sycee can be faintly imagined. This of course only applies to daily expenses. For larger sums letters of credit from one Chinese bank to another are usually reliable.

Three days after leaving Tzeliojin we came to Kiating, situated on the further shore of the Min which is really the main stream of the Yangtze



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BRIDGE IN SZECHUAN.

Kiang. Opposite the town a colossal Buddha is cut into the white face of the cliff, and a "world-famous" joss-house stands above it. Here can be bought the best silks of Szechuan, amongst others the so-called "crêpe de Chine" for which the ladies of Kiating have only to pay about tenpence a yard. White wax, collected from a peculiar tree insect, is also brought in from the Kienchang valley, before being exported to Chungking and the seaboard.

Another point of interest about Kiating is that it is on the main road to and only forty miles or so distant from the Sacred Mountain of Omei, the principal place of pilgrimage for Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhists, who come here in large numbers. At the highest point of the crest of Omei Shan is built the holy shrine, and deep down in the precipice below the outer parapet, can be seen by the pious and fortunate the "glory of Buddha," which is a peculiar reflection of the sun shining from above on to the mountain clouds.

The road to Chentu now follows the Min, on which in its upper course there is not much traffic. To the left can be discerned the commencement of the uplands that stretch away to the mighty ranges of Tibet, while on the eastern bank there is always close cultivation.

Salt and samshu (or native spirits), which had been the chief articles in transit in the eastern portion of the province, have now been replaced by silk, cotton and bamboo goods, but between

Kiating and Chentu there is not much trade of any sort to be seen. The road is not a very important one and the Min may be practically taken as the limit of the central portion of Szechuan. Beyond it going west one soon enters the wild lands of the Sifan and Tibetan tribes, who live in regions of virgin forest and almost inaccessible rocks, and are nearly unknown even to the Chinese.

Near Chentu we joined the highway from Ningyuen and Yunnan and again came across some telegraph poles which we had not seen since Chungking. The land wire from Burma to Peking comes this way to Chungking, and goes on thence to Shanghai, there being no through communication from Chentu to Sianfu and the north-east coast as yet.

We were still able to keep up a fair rate of progress, as the weather which had hitherto been rather cold and rainy now began to brighten up and show signs of spring. Entering the rich plain of Chentu we arrived next day at the capital itself, the distance from Chungking by the Kiating route being about four hundred miles, which had taken us just over a fortnight. We were now quite beyond the pale of civilisation, not only far west of the last Treaty Port but also close to the confines of Tibet, and relying entirely on the protection of the Chinese Government. As the evening set in my chair was carried under the towering gates and through the crowded streets of Chentu to the

inn of "Prosperous Friendliness," which "foreigners of distinction" were said to occasionally honour with their high presence. But among the aristocratic stoics of Chentu my arrival caused little excitement. "Evidently," remarked the innkeeper, "it is one of these trading excellencies, he carries so much baggage."

CHAPTER IX

WESTERN SZECHUAN

THE journey from Shanghai up the Yangtze Kiang to its head waters at Chentu is really a very long one. Certainly it only takes one through eighteen degrees of longitude or so, but the distance, owing to the sinuous course that has to be followed, is close on two thousand miles. It is practically going from one side of China to the other.

West of Chentu no European can go very far, for the borderland of the Tibetan tribes soon begins and beyond that lies the frontier of Tibet proper. One or two missionaries and one or two great explorers, such as Mr. Rockhill and Prince Henry of Orleans, have succeeded in penetrating a short way into that mysterious country from its eastern frontier, and English and Russian travellers have crossed various portions of it from the north and from the west. But for all practical purposes it still remains a *terra incognita*, and so long as its present system of misgovernment obtains it is likely to remain so.

While I was in Chentu I had to pay a visit to the



TIBETAN TRIBESMAN.

Viceroy of Szechuan, and with him I discussed the question of Tibet, the position of the Chinese officials there, and the chance that foreigners had of getting inside. His Excellency, who was a Manchu prince but very genial and friendly withal, told me what the world knew already.

"We," he said, "profit very little from Tibet ; nearly every mandarin we send to Lhasa is robbed or beaten on the road there. A foreigner would probably be killed directly he entered the country unless he took an army with him. They are barbarians !" He was without doubt speaking the truth. The Abbé Huc was the last European who got to Lhasa, and though since his day (1850) many others have tried to reach the mysterious home of the Dalai Llama no one has yet succeeded in doing so, though latterly one or two Englishmen have been very near. A Russian Embassy is now reported as having visited Lhasa last year, but no account has been published. The fact is that the natural difficulties of the country to be traversed are stupendous—colossal mountains, passes closed by snow and ice, wind-swept plateaux, no vegetation, roads or villages and consequently no supplies. Besides all this however there is a bitterly hostile population firmly opposed to any outsider ever entering their country.

The Tibetans thoroughly dislike the Chinese, and they look on Europeans as a rarer, weaker, and more disagreeable kind of Chinaman. Yet they also fear them, being encouraged in this by

their own llamas, who themselves strongly dread the spread of knowledge, which they know will mean the end of their own power. Yet at Darjiling, where I saw something of the Tibetans, they seem a quiet and simple folk, very different from the fanatical warriors one hears of beyond the frontier. At present the small trade between China and Tibet hardly makes it worth the while of the Court of Peking to press home its suzerain rights, even if this could be done. But as foreign nations come into the field a different state of things is bound to arise, and the time is in all probability not far distant when Tibet, like Korea, will have a "progressive party."

The exports at present are limited to musk, medicines and wool, and the imports to tea, silk and a very few manufactured articles. Mongolian Buddhists, Hindu traders and Chinese officials are the only strangers who ever find their way to Lhasa, and the visitors from Tibet to China are even rarer, being entirely composed of the pilgrims who go to Omei Shan and of the merchant caravans that come to Kuan, the tribal market town that lies forty miles west of Chentu.

I made an excursion to Kuan, not only to see the Tibetans and their trading camp, but also because the place is noted as possessing the finest, richest, and most beautiful temple in the whole Empire. It reminded one a good deal of the marvellous shrines of Nikko in Japan, with its gold, its lacquer and its bronze, but it was not nearly

so artistic, so gorgeous or so well kept. It also lacked the marvellous groves of trees that make Nikko a wonder of the world. Nevertheless the Kuan temple, with its huge placid Buddhas, its desolate courts and its colossal stone façades is a sight not easily forgotten.

Kuan is also very interesting as being the head of all the irrigation system of the Chentu plain. The Min River is here confined by a remarkable series of dams and sluices, which store up the waters and then distribute them at the proper time of year by various channels all over the surrounding districts. Most of these public works are due to the foresight and ingenuity of a hero called Li Ping, who lived in the old times when there was an independent kingdom of Szechuan, and to whom the glories of the great temple are consecrated. But his name lives best in the memory of all Szechuan and the fertile fields are his finest monument.

The valley of the Min is here very picturesque, and straight away from its right bank rise the foothills of the massive range of the Kuen Lun, which forms the eastern mountain barrier of Tibet. Beyond this there are no more Chinese, only the scattered hamlets of Sifan tribes, huntsmen and shepherds, living perched up on crags, with a few wretched lamaseries in which the priests are congregated. A devious track goes over these mountains into the Amdoa country, but the only real highroad into Tibet strikes south-west from Chentu and crosses the frontier at Batang. Kuan, how-

ever, as being close to the capital of Szechuan, draws in a considerable floating population of small traders, and is a rich and important outpost of commerce.

While I was at Kuan I had a rather amusing little adventure, illustrative of the way that the Chinese mandarins conduct their administration. I had been out at the Li Ping Temple and looking over the waterworks, and my servant, who had been left alone in the town, had somehow got into difficulties with the innkeeper. On my return the story was reported to me in long detail and certainly looked very bad. My servant said that the innkeeper had refused to have a foreign devil in his inn and had thrown my baggage outside. The reverse side of the medal was that my servant had been hectoring, and had brought down just reprisals on his head, or rather his back. Probably there was some truth on both sides, but there was no doubt that eventually my man had got beaten by some soldiers, had generally "lost face," and was now very sorry for himself. He had to be supported as much for my sake as for his own, and accordingly I sent him round to the mandarin of the town, with my Chinese card and my compliments, to tell his own story.

The result was that in about half an hour some *ting-chais*, or "yamen runners," arrived with orders to bear the innkeeper away to instant punishment. The innkeeper however solved this difficulty by a present of one dollar to the lictors, who thereupon returned to their master to say "they could not find

him." This performance was repeated three or four times during the course of the evening, the inn-keeper paying each time and the mandarin being informed that he was "lost." At last I sent for my servant, and when he came back from the Yamen I told him to return and tell the mandarin that while I had been eating my dinner I had had the pleasure of seeing his commands patently disobeyed before the whole town and his dignity set at naught. This message I fancy rather vexed him, for in another quarter of an hour mine host was very effectually caught, carried off and bamboosed. My servant's punishment was to sit up half the night and get no dinner. Probably they both deserved what they got.

We crossed the Min next day to the opposite shore, where there is a small village of tribesmen. In appearance they are not unlike the Kachins, of whom I had seen something when visiting the Yunnan frontier near Bhamo. The bridge is one of the well-known swinging arrangements, which are I believe indigenous to Tibet. To take a horse over it was of course very difficult but still just possible, for it was a bridge with a footway and side rails. As one gets further into the mountains, however, the means of getting over torrents and ravines is much less comfortable. A single rope is slung across from one side of a yawning gulf to the other. The passenger clasps hold of it with two wooden grips, to prevent his hands being cut to the skin, and slides down it.

The impetus of the descent carries him about half way up the opposite slope, but for the remainder of the distance he has to painfully haul his own weight up the rope, and this is the worst part of the business. It certainly seems a "*via dolorosa*," but women do it daily, and it is after all probably not much more disconcerting to the unaccustomed than being let down in a net from the Meteora monasteries in Thessaly. But I speak without experience, for a bridge of the slack rope pattern never came my way.

Having thoroughly digested Kuan, we returned to Chentu, where I saw some of the minor officials. My interview with the Viceroy had been much like any other audience of a similar nature ; the same cold collation, the same gorgeous raiment, the same compliments and the same tea. But I was agreeably surprised by the comparative enlightenment of the mandarins, for they admitted the utility of railways, discoursed on the "progress" of Korea, and inquired why the military caste was honoured above the civil in the continent of Europe. The "Foreign Affairs" Taotai talked excellent French, and had even been in Paris, whither he said he would like to return.

As there were at that time several English people in Chentu engaged in prospecting for various mining syndicates, as well as quite a colony of missionaries, chiefly American and Canadian, the Chinese soon became inured to seeing our "blue eyes and yellow hair" and ceased even to stare.



[Face p. 129.]

IRRIGATION WATERWHEEL.

They were certainly extremely quiet and courteous people, and there is no doubt that the inhabitants of Szechuan taken all together are better mannered and better dressed than the Chinese in any other part of the empire. Their broad streets and neat shops display a degree of wealth and cleanliness that is rarely seen elsewhere, their architecture shows solidity and elegance, and their general desire for advancement is well typified by the fact that they have already started jinrickshaws in the city, and European machinery in some of the adjacent mines.

Chentu has of course not always been such a peaceable and well-governed place as it happened to be just then. Three or four years ago there were considerable anti-foreign riots in it, and the premises of several missionary bodies were burnt down, their owners having to flee for their lives to the yamens. A heavy indemnity however was exacted by the Foreign Powers concerned and a stronger governor was forthwith despatched to Szechuan, since when there has been a distinct improvement in the state of affairs.

The city has a population, it is said, of nearly a million. It concentrates most of the local wealth of the Chentu plain, and attracts the commerce of the entire Red Basin of Szechuan. Nearly all the important trade routes from Kansu, Tibet, and Yunnan converge here, so that Chentu is the principal emporium of the west of China. It is also of political importance, both from its past history,

when it was the capital of a kingdom, and as being the residence of the Viceroy of the largest Chinese province, with a jurisdiction extending over Tibet.

Every three years the students' examinations are held here, besides which all the pilgrims on their way to and from Lhasa or Mongolia are almost bound to stay here for some time. Indeed among the most interesting sights that one sees are the extraordinary tribesmen and llamas that come in from beyond the western mountains, and wander down the streets gaping at the citizens and their shops.

The city itself is a spacious and formidable stronghold, with massive walls and gates and a considerable Tartar garrison quartered in an inner *enceinte*. Whether they would give much account of themselves against any but the most undisciplined enemy is not very sure. There are of course no Consuls, as the place is not a Treaty Port and is therefore nominally closed to trade, except for goods coming in under transit pass. It is however occasionally visited by a consular official from Chungking, and it is possible that in a short time the Chinese Government will see their way to declaring not only Chentu, but also Suifu and Kiating open ports.

The people, as has been already observed, are by no means hostile to foreigners or to foreign methods, and as their commercial spirit is well developed it appears almost certain that they would readily

admit and encourage any railway or other enterprise from which they themselves could derive profit. A line from Chungking to Chentu direct, or more preferably by way of Kiating and Tzeliojin, would present very few engineering difficulties and should pay from the very first. This and the improvement of the navigation of the River Yangtze appear to be the two most pressing items in the opening up of Szechuan, for the bettering of the minor routes of communication, the increase of local products for export and the consequent inrush of foreign goods would follow naturally.

To build a railway into Szechuan from the eastern seaboard of China or from British India are very different and much more expensive speculations. A line from the east could only come along the rocky and precipitous cliffs of the Yangtze or up the Han river and over the Tapashan. In either case it would run through desolate and unpopulated regions, and be by no means easy of construction. The same objections, only very much more emphasised, apply to a line from Assam or Burma, or for that matter from Tongking. Rugged plateaux have to be surmounted, broad rivers must be bridged, and in the two former cases a railway would have to run counter to the entire mountain and fluvial systems, which here run from north to south.

Several expeditions have executed surveys between Burma and Chentu with a view to laying down such a line, but no fixed decision as to the

best route has yet been arrived at. Probably it would be by way of Talifu and the Kienchang Valley, where the richest mines are situated; but even this is over excessively rough and accentuated country for nearly the whole distance, while not a little of it goes through unsubdued tribal districts.

It would not be right to close a chapter on Szechuan without a word or two about the Lolos, the only independent nation that now remains in the fastnesses of Western China. The Lolos live chiefly in the hills that lie to the west of Suifu and the east of Ningyuen, and are surrounded by a cordon of Chinese fortresses and troops, who however very rarely attack them. They are patriarchal tribes, brave, but quite wild, and are rapidly diminishing in numbers, as they do not intermarry. The curious point about them is that among them is found that very "fair-haired and blue-eyed" type that is always associated with the great Aryan family; and indeed there now appears little doubt that they do belong to the Caucasian stock, and that they formerly came into Yunnan from the Southern Himalayas. According to the French Consul at Chungking, M. Bons d'Anty, who is perhaps the principal living authority on this queer people, they are "*le rameau brun de la race blanche*." It is also a salient fact that they are the only existing white men who speak a "yellow" language, their tongue being akin to Burman with no traceable Sanskrit roots. They have however the regular Aryan myths and legends, and though they possess no

written literature they have a copious collection of old folk-songs and ballads.

But little is really known about the Lolos, for the Chinese neither go into their country themselves nor permit Europeans to do so, though the Lolos are said to be very friendly towards the latter, regarding them as distant kinsmen of their own. Whatever may be the truth of their origin, there is no doubt that here is an untrodden field for the explorer or the ethnologist, and one that will repay him both with fame and knowledge. In the meantime we must be content to regard Lololand as an "unsurveyed country inhabited by native tribes," as the schoolroom atlas very discreetly describes it.

CHAPTER X

CHENTU TO SIANFU

IT was now late in March 1900, and I had to get back to Peking as quickly as I could. A choice of ways lay open to me. The first was down the Min and the Yangtze, more or less by the way I had come; the second was south by land through Yunnan, on into Burma and then by sea up the coast to Hongkong; the third was straight north-east by the overland route to the capital.

The first of these was naturally the least attractive, as I had already travelled over the greater part of it. The same reasons applied to some extent to the second, for I had been all through Burma, and had even crossed the Chinese frontier to the north of Bhamo.

So the last named was that which I finally elected to follow. It was the shortest and most direct, it had rarely been travelled by Europeans and was consequently but little known, and it passed through the highly interesting city of Sianfu. It would also present over its whole course a fairly equable climate at this time of year.

Accordingly chair-bearers, coolies and horses were chartered to take us the six hundred and fifty miles that lay between Chentu and Sianfu, which is the capital of the adjoining province of Shensi.

There was some difficulty at first about getting men, as the road is not a usual one, food is expensive along it, and there is no certainty of finding a return freight. However all was eventually arranged, chiefly by the aid of my friend the "Foreign Affairs" Taotai, and one fine afternoon we moved out of Chentu in imposing procession, my servants on horseback, myself in a "green chair," the received method in these parts for any respectable official to travel by, and finally a long string of porters carrying baggage and provisions slung over their shoulders. The escort, of the ordinary Chinese pattern, hovered on the flanks and rear of the *cortège* and lent it an extra solemnity.

For the first fifty miles or so outside the city the country shows all the characteristics of the fertile, cultivated and populous Chentu plain. Irrigated fields, prosperous villages, crowded towns and incessant traffic are to be seen on every side. But all this changes very soon, and as one advances to the north of Szechuan, wilder, barer and more arduous regions open out before one.

The "Great North Road," for so it is termed, at first trends slightly to the north-east, the tracks due north leading to the well-nigh impassable mountains of Kansu and the Koko Nor country. One has in fact to get away from the right-angled corner

made by the Kuen Lun and the Tsingling, and to bear along the southern slopes of the latter range before crossing it. All the massifs of Eastern Asia radiate primarily from the "Great Divide" of the Pamir Plateau and the Hindu Kush. From that vast table-land three principal chains run out to the Pacific seaboard. The most northern (successively termed the Tian Shan, the Altai and the Yablonoi) reaches the ocean near the mouth of the Amur River. The central spur is the Altyn Tagh, which merges into the Kuen Lun and the Tsingling. The southern branch is the Himalayas with its offshoots, the Burmese Mountains and the Nanlingshan. All of these systems as they approach the Pacific become less and less accentuated, until at last they vanish into the maritime plains that were once the floor of the sea.

In Szechuan, one is always in more or less hilly country and to the west this soon rises to majestic peaks. There are also mountains to the north, though the southern portion of the province of Kansu is mainly pasture land where the Tibetan nomads feed their flocks, exporting the wool to the east by the very few practicable routes of communication that exist in that or any other direction.

The only river we had to cross was the Pai Shui, which flows down to the Kialing and ultimately to the Yangtze Kiang, and is navigable in its lower course. With this exception we came on no real waterways. Beyond the Pai Shui valley we got into the Tapashan, the range that divides the tributaries



[Face p. 137.]

COOLIES CARRYING COTTON.

that go down to the Upper Yangtze from those that flow to the Han. Villages here are rare and poor, but according to Richthofen the surrounding districts are full of neolithic remains and of fossils generally, while the inscriptions of a later age cut into the scarped face of the cliffs that border the stream testify to a former civilisation.

Few people are met on the road. Occasionally one passes a local official travelling in his chair, or perhaps an "Imperial courier" in red and yellow with his escort galloping beside him hurries by with despatches from Peking. But for the most part only the peasants are to be seen carrying the produce of their fields from some small hamlet to the little market town. Food and inns are dearer here than in any other part of the province owing to a great extent to the intermittent famines brought on by bad harvests. The populace, who even to their own authorities are inclined to be turbulent and hard to deal with, are especially hostile to foreigners. Travelling altogether is a difficult matter. Indeed as soon as I had crossed the frontier and had entered Shensi, my troubles commenced.

We had arrived late one night at a place called Ningkiang, the residence of a sub-prefect, and here we had to change the Szechuanese escort for a fresh one which would take us to the city of Sianfu, fourteen days' march further on. I sent round my servant with my card to the Yamen in the ordinary way asking for the relief to be

detailed, and saying that I purposed starting at seven o'clock next morning. The mandarin replied in the orthodox fashion that everything would be ready at the proper time, and things seemed to be going as peaceably and quietly as usual.

Next morning however there was no escort, and on his second visit to the Yamen my servant, instead of receiving compliments and excuses, got only blows; the two coolies who had gone with him rushing back to the inn to inform me of his "murder." Opining that something extraordinary was occurring I went at once to the Yamen and finding the gates open made my way in to the threshold of the inner door. Here I discovered my servant whole and safe enough, occupied in drinking tea and discussing his woes with considerable excitement. Apparently though he had not been officially bamboozed he had been beaten by the mandarin's servants and at his express order. This of course was against all the canons of Chinese or any other law, and accordingly I told the mandarin that unless he then and there apologised and immediately had the offenders beaten in my presence, I would carry the matter to the Provincial Governor at Sianfu, and if I failed to get redress there to Peking itself. This however was of no use—threaten as I would he remained sarcastically obdurate, and merely "regretted" that such an untoward incident should have occurred. There was a lot of palaver but nothing was done, and as the big battalions were on his side we had to

content ourselves with inward promises of retribution to come, as we were obviously unable to retaliate on the spot.

So we moved off sadly enough, having lost both "face" and time. But we did not forget, nor for the matter of that will the mandarin; for as the event proved he suffered far more severely at the hands of his own superiors than he would ever have done at mine. This however was not until after our arrival at the residence of the Governor. The end of the tale will be told in its own due course.

Crossing the range of the Tapashan which does not rise much above 4,000 feet we next came down to the upper valley of the Han, which is fertile and for this part of China fairly well populated. The country still remains of the southern type, with cotton, fruit gardens and some rice, but about here is the limit of these products. From the town of Hanchung a track leads in a north-easterly direction over the Tsingling Mountains to Sianfu, but the regular route bears back slightly and goes N.N.W. along the Kansu border, until it eventually strikes the Wei Valley and enters Northern China.

In the Hanchung district we had another little *contretemps*, this time of a rather more serious nature.

We had halted for the night in a half deserted village where a strong detachment of Hunanese soldiers was quartered. They are as has been said before the fiercest and the most independent

of all the Chinese, and are besides no likers of foreigners.

In the usual way I had taken the big room at the end of the furthest courtyard of the inn, and as there were a good many of the crowd casually walking in to inspect me and my belongings and if possible to annex something, my servant had put two of the escort at the second gate to prevent any one coming beyond it. This had had the desired effect, and I was contentedly writing my diary when I observed two "braves" swagger in to the outer court, roughly push aside my meek civilian sentinels, lounge up to my door and calmly walk inside, their entry being accompanied by some facetious "devil" remark. I at once told them very explicitly that their presence was not desired, and ordered them to go. To this they responded by beginning to smoke and make themselves otherwise at home. As half measures are of no value with barbarians I then promptly saluted one with a blow on the nose and the other with a kick, on which they both turned tail very much dismayed and bolted for all they were worth. In the meanwhile I congratulated myself on my rapidity of action.

I found however that there was little cause for congratulation. In less than ten minutes the street was full of soldiers, armed with their rifles, which they fired into the air, and shouting the well-known cry of "Ta, ta, Sa, sa," "Beat, beat, kill, kill," the usual precursor of an anti-foreign riot. My servant hurried in to tell me that the whole place

would very shortly be up and that we must make our dispositions for a siege. On this occasion he behaved extremely well, for there was not the least sign of fear about him, though my cook, groom and escort were trembling with terror, and he proceeded to discuss the situation with an even ostentatious *sang-froid*. There was however little time to lay plans in or to take counsel, especially as I had only one ally to look to. At his advice one of the escort was despatched post haste to the civil mandarin's Yamen to ask for assistance while the rest were told off to close the inner doors and pile up the loads behind them to form a barricade. While this was in progress I took a couple of small revolvers that I had and went out into the street, my servant following in rear with my sword, which he brandished in the "proper Peking fashion."

The appearance of the "devil" in their very midst appeased the tumult for a minute or so and this gave me my opportunity. Calling together my scanty knowledge of the language, I shouted out: "Ni yow sa, woa yow sa; cher yo shipa ren," which means, being literally translated, "You want kill, I want kill; here (meaning the revolvers) are (the lives of) eighteen men" (a slight though pardonable exaggeration, as one pistol was unloaded and the other had only five chambers). The effect however was instantaneous and all that could have been desired. An angry growling succeeded the yells, and there was a vast amount of talking and gesticulation, but no more attempt at advance.

We remained at the doors on guard and in a very few minutes more a posse of *ting-chais* under a mandarin arrived from the Yamen and without any delay several of the ringleaders of the soldiery were seized and put into the *cangue*, a wooden board that is fastened round the neck like a sort of head pillory. Shortly afterwards the commanding officer of the troops appeared on the scene armed with a short whip which he plied freely among his men, and in another quarter of an hour the angry crowd had disappeared and the place had resumed its normal state of calm.

The affair had ceased as speedily as it had begun and though there is no doubt that the whole thing was my own fault, the incident is related to show how quickly a riot can arise, and also how quickly the authorities can, if they wish to, entirely quell it.

Nothing further occurred that night, except that the mandarin of the town sent me a special "complimentary dinner," for which I had to pay double its value in "kumshaw" to the men who carried it. Next day we went away in the usual style without anything more than a rather hostile demonstration as we passed the barracks. Altogether it was a very lucky escape, and not a little due to the pluck and common-sense of my servant at a moment when most Chinese would simply have deserted.

We now entered the rugged gorges of the Tsingling Mountains, through which we had to travel for six days by a wild and difficult route before we could reach the Wei Valley. The scenery, which



THE CANGUE.

[Face p. 142.]

is always weird and solemn from its desolation, at times becomes really grandiose. The sombre ravines are rendered doubly impressive by their silence, and even when a solitary hamlet is reached it appears to be almost uninhabited. These hamlets, or rather military posts, are nearly always built at points of strategic command and are as a rule garrisoned by a few soldiers. Often however one goes for a whole day without passing more than a shepherd's hut.

At first we followed the "Black Dragon River" until we came again to the Pai Shui, and then leaving the head waters of this stream commenced ascending the topmost ridges of the range. The main pass that we had to cross, called the Tienchaling, is over 6,000 feet high and was of course covered with snow. We struggled over it in a blizzard, and now the really hard work began. Hitherto we had had good weather enough, but as soon as we had surmounted the actual water-parting and had got on to the northern face of the mountains, incessant rain set in. The descent was therefore much more tedious and trying than the climb up had been, and for two days we progressed very slowly. At last however, after several toilsome marches in fog and sleet, we struck into a narrow defile which led along the banks of a rushing stream, and following this down a rapid declivity we gradually got into more open country and soon found ourselves in the broad Wei Valley.

The general aspect of the landscape and the chief

agricultural and economic conditions are now entirely changed. Loess supervenes on red sandstone, flat treeless plains on undulating wooded hills, and barren and under-populated districts on rich and crowded towns. Shensi, though very large in extent, has only nine millions of inhabitants, and it is certainly the poorest and most backward province of China that I have visited. Along the Wei Valley, its only trade route, is concentrated nearly all the little wealth it possesses, and here alone can be seen any signs of affluence. The Wei River itself is navigable between Sianfu and Tungkuan, a distance of about ninety miles, and a passable road exists along its banks, but with this exception and that of the so-called cart road that leads up into Kansu and Central Asia, the whole province is destitute of any communications. Its capital Sianfu, formerly the metropolis of the Empire, still maintains something of the prestige of its former days, and has even now a population of close on half a million. But its importance is almost solely due to the fact that it is the meeting point of the roads from the seaboard and the interior, and not to any local causes.

Before the present century it was a considerable centre of Islam, but since the various rebellions that have devastated Northern China during the last two reigns this element has materially diminished, and left quite to themselves the people have now allowed all the disadvantages inherent on isolation to increase unopposed.

Beyond the limits of the Wei Valley the country

presents a most wretched and depressing appearance, and since the recent advent of the Imperial Court it has been suffering in addition from all the miseries of a severe famine.

We crossed the river, here only a sluggish stream, near Fengsiang, where the Kansu route joins the main road. The latter now turns to the east and continues along the left bank of the Wei until within a few miles of the capital. The track owing to the rain was in a very bad state, and the coolies had frequently to halt, worn out with the labour of toiling on in the sticky red mud. Each inn we came to seemed worse than the last, and a new spell of winter seemed to have burst on us again. The villages were miserably deficient of the most simple supplies, and bread, chickens and eggs were often impossible to procure. As a natural consequence prices were high and travelling proportionately expensive.

On the twenty-fifth day after leaving our starting point, Chentu, we again traversed the Wei River at Hsienyang, being ferried over on a broad raft against a rapid current. Riding on another fifteen miles we came late in the day to Sianfu. The distance according to my reckoning is close on seven hundred miles, though some of the few other travellers who have been this way before make it slightly less.

Reviewing the journey it seems to me that the road between Chentu and Sianfu can never be a really important one, for the major portion of it

lies through a country that can never hope to become really prosperous, while the natural difficulties that have to be surmounted would render a railway almost impossible of construction. Originally built for strategic purposes which it has long since ceased to serve, it has never been a trade route, and is now merely the official road to the west. But very few officials except those who are absolutely obliged to do so ever elect to travel on it. Generally speaking they wisely prefer to proceed to Szechuan by way of Shanghai and the Yangtze, rather than to attempt the dangers and fatigues of the "Great North Road."

CHAPTER XI

DOWN THE YELLOW RIVER

THE approach to Sianfu reminds one of the suburbs of some great city in Central Asia, though there are fewer gardens. Vast square-walled enclosures crowded with camels, mules and donkeys, and surrounded by little open rooms for travellers and merchants, recall the caravanserais of Persia or of Turkestan. Inhabitants of those far-distant regions are to be seen tending their pack animals and selling their wares outside the gates. Indeed the very air seems redolent of the steppes and makes one remember that Sianfu is only a stage on the long high road that leads from Constantinople to Peking.

Inside the city all the characteristics of North China are again prominent, though there are not the same number of desolate spaces that one sees in Peking. Hooded carts jolt over the stones, half-clad beggars infest the bridges, and the Mongol or Manchu features are often discerned amid the sullen faces of the crowd.

We had hoped to find a Kung Kuan to lodge in

but as the only two tolerable ones were occupied by a retiring Tartar General and a Taxing Taotai, we had to be content with a dirty and diminutive inn. Here we were obliged to stay for three days, as I had to get some money, to hire new transport and to visit the Governor.

The latter magnate had only recently been appointed to his post, having just been promoted from that of Provincial Treasurer. He was, like the Viceroy of Szechuan, a Manchu, but his name was distinguished all over the Empire both for his integrity and for his partiality to foreigners. To which of these two virtues must be attributed the success that attended my requests I do not know, but I trust it was to the former.

I notified him of my arrival by a "complimentary card" and begged him to indicate a time for me to call on him. This he did, and I proceeded to his Yamen in my chair and was received very courteously. After the regular exchange of compliments his Excellency inquired if my journey from Chentu had been "cheering and felicitous." I said that with one exception it had, and then proceeded to detail the affair of Ningkiang. Of this he had already heard, for the offending mandarin had sent on a special courier with the news. His Excellency however took a right view of the matter, and after a little argument promised that the sub-prefect should be reprimanded. But as a Chinese official's promise is not always to be absolutely relied on, I pressed for more than this,



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TAKTAR GENERAL AND HIS COURT.

saying that I should not wish to carry it further. At first he demurred, but eventually it was settled that the sub-prefect should be dismissed from his position, and that an official notification to that effect should be given me by the Governor. At the same time the Governor intimated that an honorific distinction should be conferred on my servant as a kind of sop to his wounded dignity. This seemed to us all a fair settlement.

Whether the mandarin was or was not actually deprived of his office I do not know, but it is certain that he had to pay for his insolence in some way or other, probably by a heavy fine paid into the Governor's own treasury; so that it is highly improbable that he will treat the next oreigner who passes by his town as he did the last.

Later on in the day an imposing document arrived at the inn in which the "incident" was set down in very high-flown language, and soon afterwards the Governor paid me a return visit and my "honourable interpreter" received a patent authorising him to wear behind his cap a *lan ling*, or blue feather, in recognition of long and valuable services rendered alike to Chinese and foreigners.

The missionaries in Sianfu were considerably interested in the whole of this affair, and not a little pleased at its result, for it appeared that some of them had experienced similar treatment when travelling in the interior. Nearly all of those who were then in the city were Swedes, though they

spoke English perfectly. They showed me the greatest hospitality and kindness during my stay, and gave me some very useful information.

The public buildings in Sianfu are ponderous structures and for the most part in ruins, though the main street that runs through the city from west to east is a fine broad thoroughfare, with well-stocked shops and plenty of traffic. Outside the western gate is the famous "Nestorian tablet," dating from about 800 A.D., when that branch of the Christian religion flourished in China. Half a day's march beyond the east gate are the "hot springs" of the Hwashan, which are renowned far and wide for their healing powers. On our first stage from Sianfu we halted here for the night at a remarkably picturesque "Travellers' Pavilion," built under the cliffs of the range. It was one of the last glimpses of the fine mountain scenery that we had.

The road we now had to follow leads almost due east until far into the province of Honan. First of all it follows the right bank of the Wei until its junction with the Hoang Ho or Yellow River near the fortress of Tungkuan. The main Peking road then crosses over and bears north-east through Shansi to Taiyuen and Peking, but the route that I intended going by continues along the south bank of the Yellow River until it reaches the city of Honanfu. It then strikes across north-east and goes up to Weihui on the other Wei Ho, which descends thence to the sea at Tientsin.

We started out from Sianfu by a poor and muddy

track and in exceptionally bad weather, which continued for most of the journey. On the fourth day we arrived at the famous fort of Tungkuan. Up to this point alluvial and cultivated plains border the river stretching out to the left, while on the right lie the orchards and fruit gardens that fringe the slopes of the sacred Hwashan.

Tungkuan itself occupies a remarkable natural position and deserves a particular description. The mountainous conformation of Northern China is such that there is practically only one approach from the seaboard to the interior. This is that by way of Tungkuan, where the three roads from Peking, Honanfu, and Nanking unite.

Just below the fortress there is a defile, where the Yellow River flowing down from the north makes its great bend to the east, between the Shansi and the Shensi Mountains. Through this defile the road passes and then continues west to Sianfu, where it bifurcates, one branch going up to Lanchow and Turkestan, and the other (the Great North Road) to Chentu and Tibet. North of Tungkuan the only routes from east to west lie over the deserts of Mongolia. South there is no parallel approach nearer than the Yangtze Gorges, where narrow ravines and difficult rapids prevent any advance on a large scale. Tungkuan thus occupies a strategic point of considerable value, and it has been called with some reason the "Gate of Central Asia."

The town and fortress combined are built on the

loess cliffs that here overhang the broad channel of the Hoang Ho. The population is but little over 5,000 souls, of which not one-fifth are garrison, and though there is a large assortment of field guns of various patterns in the arsenal, they are mostly so antiquated and neglected as not to be very formidable.

We stayed here a night, and leaving by the east gate crossed next morning into the Honan Province. The direct Peking road, which leaves Tungkuan by the north or water gate, where the ferry lies, is very bad and very long, as it goes over mountains almost continuously. We however kept along the Yellow River by an equally execrable but shorter road in point of time, going due east.

The Yellow River is here considered more or less navigable, and one occasionally sees a few heavy lumbering barges, which more resemble rafts than boats, gliding down the stream. Going up is a much harder matter, for the banks are so undercut that there is no towing path, and the current runs so swiftly that the labour of tracking or poling is tremendous. Lower down the channel becomes so shallow that navigation is quite impracticable until near Kaifong, when there is again a distance of about a hundred miles over which boats can travel. Below this the river expands into a flood of enormous width with dangerous eddies, and so it remains until it finally reaches the sea. All this portion of its basin is continually exposed to the disastrous inundations that have rightly earned for

the Hoang Ho its well-known name of "China's Sorrow." Embankments have been erected and all sorts of provisions made against its encroachments, but apparently in vain, for every few years whole districts are submerged, and peasants, crops and villages swept away by the rising waters. Indeed it is very doubtful whether it will ever be possible to materially improve the Yellow River, and the most that can be hoped for is to check its widespread devastations.

Travelling through poor and very monotonous country, much cut up into clayey nullahs, we reached in six days the city of Honanfu, the chief cotton mart of the province. Under the Sung dynasty it was the metropolis of the Empire but it is now of very small repute. In ordinary circumstances the roads here should have been passable for wheeled traffic, but their state at that time owing to the rain made it difficult for even a foot passenger to get along them. Carts would frequently take a whole day toiling up the side of a single hill, and riding was the only expeditious way of travelling.

From Honanfu we turned north-east and crossed the Yellow River by a ferry. My previous recollections had prepared me for all sorts of delays, but providentially we had a fair passage and got over in under two hours, both wind and current being with us. Another day's march brought us to Huaiking, situated in a fertile plain at the foot of the Shansi hills, and after three days' further journeying to the east we at last arrived at Weihui, where I joined my former route from Hankow to Peking.

All this part of China is of the highest interest to the English, for many railway, mining and other commercial projects are bound to originate here. Potentially it is the wealthiest known portion of the Empire and it therefore merits careful consideration.

The southern part of Shansi and northern half of Honan abound in coal and iron. The deposits lie chiefly in the mountains that rise slightly to the north of the left bank of the Yellow River, and also in the hilly country to the south-west of Honanfu. Some of these mines have been primitively worked for centuries by the natives and produce excellent anthracite in enormous blocks, but many remain quite unopened. The total area of the coal beds is now generally believed to be the largest yet discovered in the world, and the depth of the seams has never yet been gauged. Of the iron less is known, but all the neighbouring districts are renowned for their metal work, and knives and other steel and iron implements go from here all over the surrounding provinces.

The population round Huaiking and Honanfu is very dense, and as the ground is naturally fertile workmen are extremely cheap. In fact there appears to be little doubt that in the near future this portion of China will become the manufacturing centre of the Empire.

Mineral wealth undoubtedly exists here in immense quantities, the loess plains that descend to the sea are extremely prolific, and labour is handy and inexpensive. All that is needed is some reasonable



MANDARIN WITH BUTTON AND FEATHER.

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means of transport to bring the products of the earth to the seaboard or to the Yangtze. This done enormous profits would be rapidly realised. To the construction of a railway the flat country opposes few obstacles, and the regions through which it would pass on its way to the sea or the river lie beyond the coalfields and only produce corn. They could thus be simultaneously tapped for grain and supplied with fuel. For its terminus there are several good ports within easy distance, either on the Gulf of Pechili or on the Lower Yangtze. The only need seems to be sufficient enterprise to build the line and to commence working the mines on European methods. Once this was done agriculture would soon develop itself.

The concessions of the mines are now in the hands of the Peking Syndicate, who also possess the right of building a railway to the nearest and best navigable waterway. A rival company, that of the Lu-Han Railway (under Belgian auspices) has indeed secured the connection between Peking and Hankow by means of a line which is already partially laid, but there is no reason why both (and indeed many more) such arteries of commerce should not be made, for the country is populous and rich enough to support them all.

Up to the present little has been done by the British company beyond some surveys of the projected lines; but it is to be hoped that as soon as the existing condition of Northern China has

been somewhat improved and the interior has resumed its normal condition, no more time will be lost.

These coalfields are the best known assets of the entire Empire and any undertaking to exploit them and to export their products has the most brilliant prospects before it. Nor can the political value of such a lucrative possession be overrated. For though the economic strength of the position would be materially augmented if the Lu-Han line were in the same hands as the mines, the latter are in any case its real key.

There is a still broader question. Rousseau believed that corn and iron were the two chief factors in the civilisation of humanity. In this portion of China all three abound, and if we accept the theory it is here that we must look for the first social development. Control or influence over the population would then be of the first importance to a commercial Power interested in the future of China.

We passed strings and strings of coolies as we slowly advanced along the road, all of them wheeling their barrows, piled up with huge blocks of coal, on their way to Huaiking which is the market town. From here the coal goes out to the villages, but only within a limited radius, as transport soon doubles its price. Outside the walls begins the upper stream of the Wei Ho, but at most seasons of the year there is so little water in it that it is not navigable. At Weihui however boats of passable size, drawing eighteen inches or so, can as a rule be

used, and on our arrival at this town we found no difficulty in hiring one.

The rain had now finished and the weather was getting extremely hot, for we were well on into May. Having already experienced the parching heat of an early summer on the Great Plain I did not wish to undergo it again, besides which I was anxious to get to Peking before June, in which month I intended leaving for England.

We accordingly struck a bargain without much ado and set off the next morning on our way to Tientsin, following the same course as on the journey from Hankow the year before. The dust-storms were if possible even worse than they had been then, and for two whole days we were obliged to moor under the lee of the bank, being quite unable to make any head against the blinding wind. This was of course climatic, being due to the exceptionally dry spring there had been in North Eastern China. Indeed the long-continued drought of 1900 was mainly instrumental in bringing on the terrible Boxer revolution several months before its leaders had arranged its outbreak. Of the Boxer question I was at this time profoundly ignorant, though we were now going right through their country and hurrying post haste to the very heart of their propaganda. Strange to say we saw no signs whatever of the excited state of feeling in Shantung and Southern Chili as we travelled along, nor had we any idea of the universal national upheaval that was then only too imminent.

The new Governor of Shantung, the celebrated Yuen-shi-kai, had lately passed up to take over his post at Tsinan, and we occasionally met some of his "tail" of minor mandarins and hangers-on following him up stream in small house boats. But every one seemed very quiet, the Union Jack at our masthead aroused no remark, and we even had no escort for all the latter part of our route, a very unusual thing for a foreigner in the interior of China nowadays. Halfway from Weihui to Tientsin we entered the Grand Canal, almost dry and with apparently no traffic on it, and kept on our regular course down the river doing about thirty miles a day. The winds were as a rule against us and we did not make such good time as we had done in the previous year, when we had been particularly fortunate. At last however we arrived at the city of Tientsin, the mass of shipping outside seeming denser than ever.

The journey from Sianfu had taken us nearly a month, and that from Shanghai just over four, so that the prospect of getting back to the Legation at Peking and seeing one's friends again was very pleasant. But I was not to get there, and in a very few weeks was to come the hardest, the most interesting and the most exciting part of all my stay in the Far East.

CHAPTER XII

TIENTSIN AND PORT ARTHUR

IT is not my intention to discuss here the history and gradual evolution of those dynastic or anti-foreign feelings that led to the Boxer movement, or to recapitulate in any detail the events that precipitated its outbreak. Local experts and competent critics have already dealt with both subjects, whilst the heroic siege in the Chinese capital has been graphically described by several of those who participated in it. My own experiences were limited to the first expedition to relieve the Foreign Legations in Peking, to the military operations prior and subsequent to it that took place round Tientsin in June and July, and to a glimpse of the Russian campaign in Manchuria. Before the first troubles began however I had occasion to pay a visit to Port Arthur, and it was this that prevented me from being besieged in the British Legation, and caused me to be attached to the Admiral's Expedition.

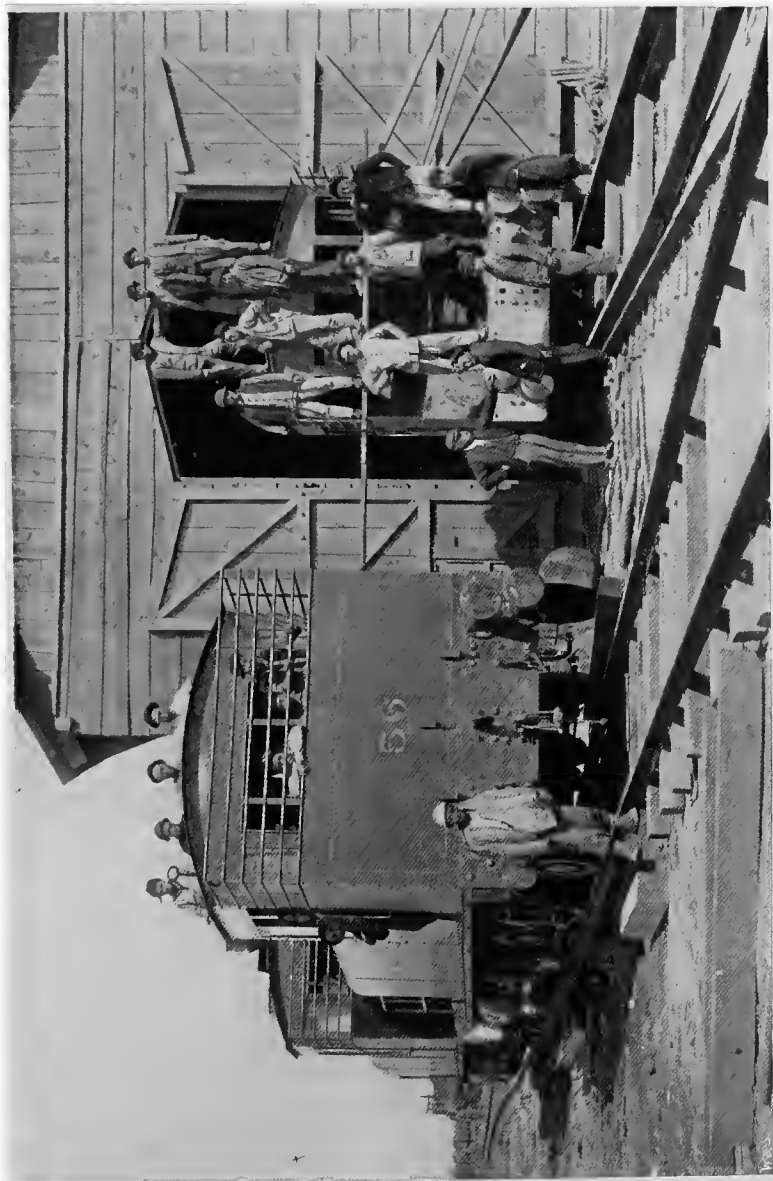
When I arrived by boat from my long journey in the interior of China it was nearing the end of May. I was obliged to stay in Tientsin for a few days in

order to complete certain reports, and I then had to go over to Port Arthur before finally returning to Peking. I accordingly made my arrangements for proceeding there by the new railway, and got off about May 21st. The British engineers had now got the rails laid right round the Gulf as far as Newchwang, to which place a construction train ran daily. Beyond that the Russian line down the Liaotung Peninsula was also working, so that there was through rail communication all the way from Tientsin to Port Arthur, with the exception of the ferry across the Liao River.

I started on a very hot morning, with my servant and things for a few days only, and stayed the first night at Shanhaikwan. The next day's run brought us to Kowpanza, the junction for the new branch to Sinminting, and the morning after we were at Newchwang.

Here I spent two days more in getting permission from my friends the Russians to travel south by their railway, which had not yet been officially opened. It was at last accorded me, and in the company of the German Military Attaché at Tokio I now entrained for Port Arthur. This journey again takes two days, for the trains go very spasmodically and the halts are long and frequent.

We passed an uncomfortable night at Hwafantien, a small mining village where the Russians have got some coal shafts, and arrived late the next afternoon at Port Arthur, the maritime terminus of the railway. The only advantage of the slow



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RUSSIAN RAILWAY AT NEWCHWANG.

travelling was that we got an excellent view of the country.

The general configuration of this southern part of Manchuria is a backbone of mountains running from north to south, and gradually decreasing in height as they approach the sea. The land is not particularly fertile and does not produce many crops, nor is the population numerous or industrious. There are no large rivers, and the only important line of communication is the old high-road which is now followed by the railway. There is some mineral wealth, but not much, the coal being of very poor quality. The Russian hinterland as far as it is defined extends about half-way up the peninsula, but at that time there was no official frontier. The lie of the country and the relation of the different localities can best be seen from the map. About twenty miles from its extreme southern point the peninsula narrows down to a width of only four miles near the small town of Kinchou, which was left in the possession of the Chinese by the Port Arthur Convention, but has now been taken over by the Russians. South of this on the eastern coast a broad bay opens out, having on its northern shore Talienwan and on its southern the new commercial port of Dalny. To both of these places short branches run from the main line, which itself continues to the fortress of Port Arthur.

This part of the railway was then practically completed, though the buildings and bridges were not

all up ; but otherwise the line was in fair working order and a regular service had been established for several months. (Details of the distances, &c., on the Trans-Manchurian Railway will be found in Appendix C.)

To me Port Arthur seemed a very disappointing harbour, especially from a military point of view. To begin with it cannot accommodate more than four first-class battleships with any manœuvring room, and most of the shipping has to lie in the roads outside. Secondly it is an extremely unhealthy spot in which to quarter troops, owing to the vast expanse of mud that is daily uncovered by the ebb tide. And thirdly it has to draw all its supplies from Chefoo across the straits, while owing to the configuration of the country it could be easily blockaded both by land and by sea and so quickly starved out.

We were told that there was considerable mortality among the troops owing to typhus, and that this had delayed the work on the forts. A scheme however was on foot for improving the harbour by cutting another entrance through the south-western arm of the port and deepening the anchorage on that side. It was thought that in this way a continuous current would be let in from the sea, which would be more sanitary, while ships would also be able to find better protection from indirect fire from the outside, if they lay under the lee of the high hills to the south-west.

So far I believe these projects have not been

put into practice, but there is no doubt that they are very necessary if Port Arthur is to be rendered of any real value. Indeed, comparing it with the much maligned Wei-hai-wei, not a few naval officers who knew both places prefer the latter. Wei-hai-wei, with the Lu-kun-tao Island properly fortified, needs but few land defences, and could easily be made a strategical position of no mean importance.

The town of Port Arthur is dirty, poor and straggling, The garrison is said to amount to some ten thousand and the Chinese inhabitants to as many more, but there appears no prospect of the latter increasing. There is no trade, the Russians are not particularly popular, and native immigration is not encouraged.

In Dalny on the other hand, whither I went on my way back north again, every provision is being made for a large commercial population. A good pier and wharves, blocks of fine buildings and broad streets and squares are being built, while the situation of the town in the spacious Victoria Bay has been excellently chosen.

Talienwan, which lies ten miles across the water, still remains a little fishing village, and it is not apparently the intention of the Russians to convert it into anything more. So far the land forts in its rear have not been rearmed nor have any new sea defences been added, though there is need for both.

We sailed across from Dalny to Talienwan in a small junk, and as the train, or rather the engine

and truck which does duty for one, had just left, we chartered two rickshaws to get us to the junction in time for the mail. This however they failed to do, so, after waiting three or four hours in a Chinese hut that figured as a Russian hotel, I managed by the kind offices of a Cossack guard to get a passage in a goods train.

On this I proceeded on my return journey alone, my Teuton companion having gone off by sea to Chemulpo. Another day brought me back to Newchwang where for the first time I began to hear really serious reports about the Boxers. Hitherto most people had merely regarded them either as the brigands and rebels who are the usual outcome of drought and famine, or as one of those secret societies which are always going to do so much but which generally do nothing at all. On this occasion however even my servant, who was always of a sceptical disposition when the prowess of his own countrymen was concerned, told me that "Must big trouble; I-Ho-Tuan belong sky man"; from which I inferred that the Boxers had convinced him of their divine mission, their supernatural powers and their wholesale intentions of exterminating foreigners. Nevertheless among the Europeans in Newchwang there was no particular excitement, though it was now June 1st, and few if any of the best informed people really credited that there was danger to be feared in any part of Northern China.

My train left next morning, carrying a lot of Chinese coolies who were going back to their homes



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CHINESE SOLDIERS

in Chili and Shantung, being tired of working for the Russians. Along the line we passed many more gangs, all occupied as usual. At (the northern) Kinchou however, where we arrived next morning, an English railway superintendent told me that it was rumoured that the Boxers had looted and burnt the station at Fengtai, near Peking, and on getting to Shanhaikwan that evening I found this confirmed. Indeed it was said that the whole metropolitan province was in a state of insurrection.

We left in the ordinary way early next day, June 4th, and I telegraphed to Peking for ponies to meet me at Machiapu, two miles from the South Gate, expecting to get in that night in time for an Eton dinner. But as we went along the coast in the direction of Taku it soon became obvious that something very unusual was taking place. First of all the engine broke down, whereupon all the Chinese on the train at once became panic stricken. This delayed us for two hours. Next, at Lutai, the chief camp and headquarters of General Nieh's "foreign-drilled" division of the Imperial troops, we found a thousand Chinese soldiers paraded in marching order waiting for us, and these were packed into trucks and tacked on behind us. This lost still more time. Finally after we had at last got off we were again stopped at Tongku in order to take up a small detachment of German bluejackets, who had just come in from the fleet, then riding at anchor outside the bar. In this way we did not get into Tientsin until after six o'clock in the evening,

and I then found that no train had gone to Peking for two days, and that the intervening country was in open revolt. Four hundred bluejackets and marines had however been sent up to act as Legation guards several days before.

In the Consulate there was a telegram from my chief, Sir Claude Macdonald ordering me to wait a few days and to help in the work there, which had become very heavy in the last week. Accordingly from the 5th to the 9th I was occupied most of the day and night.

Events now began to succeed each other very rapidly, and it became more and more patent every hour to us in Tientsin that the native feeling there was becoming excessively hostile. Indeed it soon became impossible to go and see the Viceroy, who remained shut up in his Yamen, unwilling or unable to leave it or to receive visitors. In the meantime a few European troops came up to Tientsin, though only in very small detachments. Preparations however were made for accommodating larger forces, should their presence become necessary. But for a day or so there was a lull, and there again seemed a chance of the situation quieting down.

On the 7th June a further detachment of marines was ordered to go up to Peking, and the officer commanding them very kindly took me on as an extra subaltern; but after waiting all day on the platform we were unable to start, as the Viceroy refused to allow any trains to attempt to travel over the line in its present dangerous and damaged con-

dition. During the next forty-eight hours matters changed so much for the worse that on June 9th it was decided to despatch the largest available force from the fleet in order to relieve the Legations in Peking. The British Admiral, Sir Edward Seymour, who led the expedition, was then good enough to appoint me to his staff as Intelligence Officer, and in this way, instead of being besieged in the Legation, I found myself attached to the Expedition to relieve it.

Of this first endeavour to raise the siege of Peking little is known, and though it was unsuccessful in its attempt it deserves a chapter to itself.

At home it was soon forgotten, but those who took part in it will, I think, remember it to the end of their lives.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ADMIRAL'S EXPEDITION

FOR some days the Legations had been in correspondence with the International Fleet at Taku, and the telegrams received by the Admirals from the Ministers in Peking had, during the 8th and 9th of June, rapidly become more and more urgent. At a hurried council of war held on board the British flagship on the latter day it was decided to despatch to their assistance a naval brigade consisting of all the bluejackets and marines that could be spared from the various squadrons. The situation appeared too critical and the danger of a wholesale massacre too imminent to justify delaying until troops could be brought from Hongkong or Port Arthur.

Collected at few hours' notice from the battleships and cruisers of the eight nations then lying in the Taku roads, and landed during the night by such gunboats and torpedo destroyers as could cross the bar and run in under the guns of the Chinese sea-forts, the combined column amounted all told to little over 2,000 men, 900 of whom were British.

In the small hours of Sunday morning (10th) the men were disembarked at Tongku, whence they proceeded by rail to Tientsin Settlement, thirty miles higher up the Pai Ho or White River. Here a short halt was made to enable them to breakfast, and at ten o'clock the first train, containing most of the British and the small American, Austrian, and Italian contingents, left Tientsin for Peking, which lies eighty miles to the north-west across the Chili plain. Nine days had now elapsed since there had been any through communication by rail with the capital, but it was known that the line was intact as far as Yangtsun, twenty miles from Tientsin and the point where the railway crosses the river. There was also no reliable news of any great damage beyond.

A number of trucks with rails, sleepers and repairing material, besides several English engineers and drivers and seventy Chinese coolies, accompanied the first detachment of troops. The rest of the British and all the Russians, French and Japanese remained on the platform while the second and third special trains were put together. The Germans did not come up from Tongku until some hours later, when they followed at once.

The parching heat of a North China summer was now at its zenith, and we steamed off into the sunshine with the hot dusty plain spreading away before us into haze, and the smart new station behind, lined with our European comrades and packed with the glowering native crowd. We looked forward to

a journey of a few hours perhaps, at the most of a day, and then to an easy and successful march into the Tartar City and the resumption of diplomacy. Little did we think that we should never get to Peking, and that when we struggled back to Tientsin with a seventh of our force killed and wounded, the station, the settlement, and the many signs of civilisation that we now saw and took pride in would be burnt and desolated ruins, riddled with shot and shell and disfigured by rotting corpses.

No one at the time of our departure from Tientsin credited the rumour that the Imperial troops were against us. After the murder of the first two missionaries, Mr. Norman and Mr. Robinson, General Nieh had engaged the Boxers near Yangtsun and had sent into the Viceroy seventy heads in baskets as "a guarantee of good faith." He now lay there in camp, and on June 10th we passed him soon after midday, his soldiers coming up to ours and fraternising to the best of their ability. We crossed the Pai Ho by the fine iron bridge that here spans it and moving slowly on arrived almost at Lofa (30 miles) before finding any signs of damage to the line. Only a few sleepers and rails had been displaced and we were able to make this good the next day, in the evening of which we reached Langfang, half-way between Tientsin and Peking. Here more serious mischief had been done and the engineers and coolies, assisted by fatigue parties of bluejackets, set to

work in good earnest, using the rails of the one track to repair the other.

The force was now in five trains, its eventual disposition being as follows : No. 1 contained the coolies and railway material, half the British force, the Americans and the Austrians. In this train lived the Admiral and his staff. No. 2 held the remainder of the British, the Japanese, and some of the French. No. 3 the Germans. No. 4 the Russians, the rest of the French and the Italians. No. 5 was merely a supply train which ran to and fro between the rail-head and Tientsin as long as communication continued possible. The rolling stock comprised altogether five locomotives and over a hundred coaches and trucks.

The country through which we were moving was the flat loess plain that constitutes the seaboard of most of Northern China. It is watered by the insignificant streams of the Red and White Rivers, which, descending from the Shansi Mountains to the west and east of Peking, unite with the Grand Canal near Tientsin. Cultivation as soon as the Taku marshes are left behind is general, corn, millet, and maize being the principal crops. The trees, with the exception of those that cluster round the villages, have all been cut down, and the landscape, unrelieved by hills, forests or lakes, presents a monotonous and uninteresting aspect. The climate at that season of the year, a month or more before the earliest rains, was intensely dry and hot, the sun at midday striking down with

tremendous heat on the arid lowlands, while every two or three days a dust-storm enveloped earth and sky in a burning sandy whirlwind which robbed us of sight, sound and almost of sense.

For the first two days the population lay low and for all we saw of them we might have been traveling through the Mongolian desert. An occasional visit to a hamlet to get supplies usually produced a dozen chickens and a few eggs, which we bargained for with some solitary white-bearded elder, too helpless or too avaricious to run away; the rest of the village, he would tell us, had "feared and fled," though in point of fact they were probably only a mile or so off, as we could often see them from the track working in their fields. Their horses, mules, and donkeys however had all gone, taken no doubt by the rebels.

On the third day, when they had appraised our true strength and we had almost ceased to believe in their military existence, the Boxers attacked us. It was, I remember, in the afternoon, and we were solacing ourselves in the Admiral's carriage with a little intellectual conversation, the subject being how many quarts of Tansan water could be assimilated per day by one individual in that heat without bringing on dropsy, and whether an order for sixty dozen more would create a corner or a panic in Tientsin. It was never settled. A bugle, sounding an unknown call from the German picquets, acted like an electric shock, and the speculation remains indefinitely unsolved.

In a few minutes the foreigners of No. 1 train were deployed to the right, the British to the left, and before we ourselves had got to the working party at the rail-head, where the attack was concentrated, the crackling fusillade and red turbans of the Boxers saluted our ears and eyes.

They came on us in a ragged line, advancing at the double from a village some quarter of a mile to the left flank. Not more than a couple of hundred, armed with swords, spears, gingalls and rifles, many of them being quite boys. To any one who had been some little time in China it was an almost incredible sight, for there was no sign of fear or hesitation, and these were not fanatical "braves," or the trained soldiers of the Empress, but the quiet peace-loving peasantry—the countryside in arms against the foreigner. As they approached they dropped on their knees, lifting up their hands to heaven to invoke the God of War, the chief of their Boxer freemasonry. Then they charged until they dropped again as our volleys began to tell. In twenty minutes they were in full retreat, leaving some sixty dead on the field.

The five or six wounded they had not carried away were brought in and laid in a truck, covered with blood, almost naked, and two of them mere children, a pitiful sight. I went to speak to them and said to my Chinese servant, who had previously freely expressed his doubts as to the powers of foreigners against the rebels, "You see the Boxers are not invulnerable." "No," he answered, "but

these are not real Boxers, only make-believe ; or if they are real," he added as a reserve argument, "in a few days they will get up healed, disappear miraculously, and then come and fight again." To such sophistry there is no reply, and though a closer acquaintance with them subsequently made him discount a good deal of their claims, to the end of the campaign he, like the great mass of the Chinese people, believed that a "good" Boxer was supernatural. Probably a "good" Boxer is.

We now knew that we were going to have trouble, and on the 14th June communication with Tientsin came to an end, the supply train failing to get back past Yangtsun and returning to us next day with the news that the line there was held, if not destroyed, and that Nieh's camp had gone. That morning we were attacked in considerable numbers by the Boxers and lost five Italians, killing about a hundred of the rebels. In the afternoon Lieut. Colomb, R.N., who with thirty blue-jackets was holding the station at Lofa (which had been converted into a defensible position) was invested by nearly a thousand. He managed however to send up news to us, and before we got back to his assistance he had managed to drive off all his enemies. We deployed however and pursued them with our Maxims.

The tactics of the Boxers, both on this and other occasions, were comparatively simple. They attacked in rank entire, prefacing their charge by volleys from firearms and making considerable use



REPAIRING THE LINE.



GUN ON TRUCK.

[Face p. 174.]

of cover. Their shooting was bad, and they appeared to have no proper leaders or organisation. But what they lacked in drill they made up for in courage and dash, their bravery in the face of heavy odds continually convincing us that there is much less cowardice and much more patriotism or faith among the Chinese than has hitherto been believed. The Imperial troops, with whom we subsequently had continual fighting, did not show up nearly so well. They never attacked except in vastly superior force and rarely waited for close quarters. Their artillery practice was certainly good, but their cavalry seemed to understand the great game of bluff better than that of cold steel. Their retreats were always panicky and covered by large discharges of fire-crackers. Yet on the whole their tenacity of defence was remarkable, confirming the theory that barbaric nations much exaggerate the material value of earthworks and walls, and underestimate those moral powers of discipline and self-confidence on which civilisation chiefly relies. It cannot be denied however that their mobility was far greater than ours, and that it was a potent force against us.

We were now making but slow progress, for the line was badly torn about, rails and girders bent and twisted, sleepers burnt and watering apparatus completely gutted. Four miles a day was all that could be done, and the question of leaving the trains and proceeding by march route was seriously debated.

From native couriers we knew that the Legations

were still holding out, and that so far they, like ourselves, had not been attacked by any Imperial troops ; but we were disturbed by the fact that we had had no news nor supplies from Tientsin for several days, and that, in view of our laborious advance, our ammunition and provisions could not last for long. Peking we knew was in a better state, and we understood that they were comparatively safe for another ten days, or until the Imperial troops in the capital made a move. Accordingly we stuck to the railway which alone could preserve the direct line between Peking and the sea, expecting that the Tientsin troops, who had plenty of rolling stock and repairing material, would look after our communications. On the 16th however we found for certain that the line south of Yangtsun had been damaged, and accordingly one train was sent back to mend and if necessary to protect it.

Our force was now far more extended than was consistent with its security, and it was clear that fresh supplies from Tientsin alone could enable us to get through to Peking, or to be of any service when we got there. To arrive without food and ammunition, and with a number of wounded, would be of little help. Another train therefore moved down to Yangtsun to hold that most important point, where the railway crosses the river, and to assist in the endeavour to restore connection with Tientsin. An advance on Peking by marching from Langfang was judged impracticable, as there was no road, we were absolutely without transport,

and directly in front of us lay the South Hunting Park, which was packed with the camps of the Peking Field Force. Behind them again and in front of the south gate of the Chinese city lay, we knew, most of General Tung-fuh-siang's Kansu soldiery.

There remained however the Pai Ho, by which the 1860 Expedition had gone up, and though the water was very low and there would be great difficulty in collecting junks at Yangtsun, and later on in marching from Tungchow to Peking without transport, we still hoped to be able to approach the capital by this route. But before this could be attempted it was imperative to secure the Yangtsun position and the line between that place and Tientsin, as otherwise we ran the risk of complete isolation.

Early on Sunday morning, 17th June, a week after we had started, the Taku Forts were taken by the Allied Forces in order to relieve Tientsin. That city was invested by the Boxers who began to bombard it next day. Of this of course we were quite ignorant. But the Court in Peking must have received instant news of the fact, for on the afternoon of the 18th Captain von Usedom, the German officer in command of the troops left at Langfang, was attacked by the Imperial forces belonging to General Tung-fuh-siang's division. Their numbers were estimated at 7,000 and they were well armed with modern rifles which they used with effect, so that we suffered considerable casualties. They

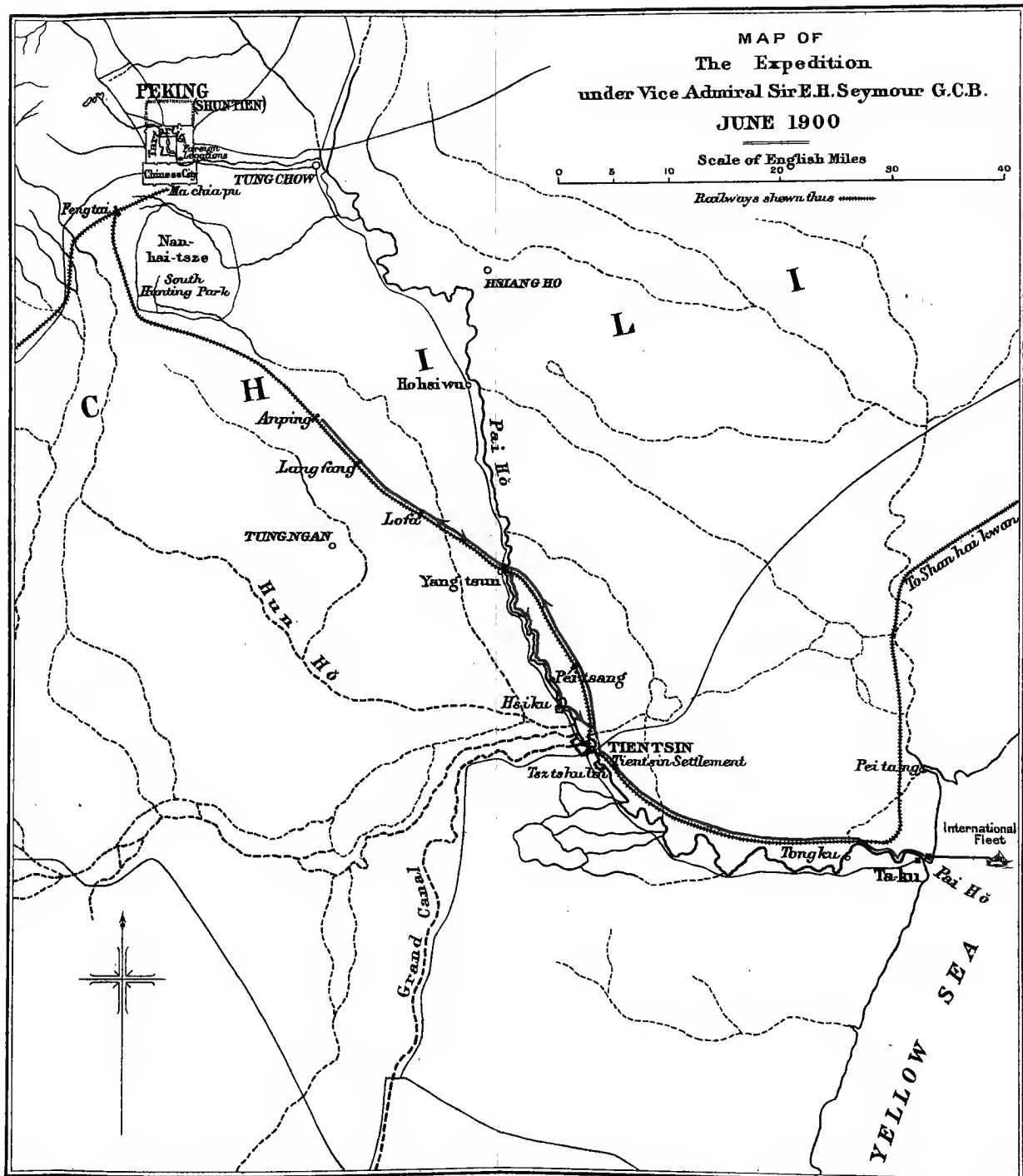
were repulsed however with heavy slaughter by the gallantry of the Allied troops, and retreated to the north.

Our trains then all concentrated at Yangtsun, where the bridge had been thoroughly wrecked and the station completely destroyed. The big guns booming from Tientsin made us aware that something untoward was going on in that direction, though whether it was Imperial troops, Boxers or Allies, or who was fighting whom, we could not guess. The last train down from Langfang had sighted a considerable force of Imperial cavalry in pursuit, and with the troops against us in front and behind, and the Boxers and the whole countryside in arms all around us, it became vital to secure our own safety before advancing again. To do this fresh ammunition, provisions, and reinforcements were a *sine qua non*, and to get them we must communicate with Tientsin as quickly as possible. To effect this communication we must also move as a unit, our force being too small to divide.

Any chance of returning by the railway had long since gone, for after a careful examination it was found impracticable to get the trains across the bridge in its present condition. We had therefore only the river left, and on the 18th we seized four junks, all we could find, and embarking the wounded and our remaining supplies on them, left the trains and commenced to march back on Tientsin along the left bank. The distance by the river is barely thirty miles, and it may seem an easy task to

Scale of English Miles

Railways shown thus =====



accomplish that in four days. It was the most toilsome and disheartening work imaginable.

Starting at 4 a.m. and not halting for the night until seven o'clock in the evening, we barely averaged six miles a day. The junks, which had to be tracked or towed, were continually grounding owing to the shallow water, and the march of the column had to be regulated by their pace. At every half mile or so along the banks are situated straggling wooded villages, surrounded by ploughed fields and irrigation ditches, through which lay our only road. Nearly every one of these villages was held by Boxers in more or less force, but always sufficient to make us halt the junks, deploy, and form firing line. These positions, with their high mud-walled houses, clusters of timber and treeless zone outside, were easy to hold, and the first lesson we learnt was that the attack must always be prepared to lose four or five times as much as the defence. We had to bring our machine and light field guns into action, as the Boxers had three and six-pounders, pom-poms, and large native gingalls, and were frequently entrenched. We were also continually being harassed on our left flank by masses of Imperial cavalry accompanied by horse artillery (12 and 15-pounders), with which they regularly shelled us from the railway embankment as soon as we had again got into column. Being destitute of any mounted force ourselves, we had to protect our flank by a strong detachment of marines, who were thus always exposed and suffered severely. In the

evening we bivouacked in the open, and the outposts, who had been fighting and marching all day, had to watch all night. The wounded, packed into the close Chinese junks under a blazing sun and with only three doctors and a very limited amount of medical comforts, were in a still worse plight, while the whole force had now been put on half rations.

On the 21st we arrived outside the large town of Peitsang, which we took after several hours' hard fighting. Here the Admiral's flag captain, who acted as chief of the staff, was badly hit. Our casualties had now risen to 150, as we had again been engaged with the Imperial troops, this time from the south. But the worst was yet to come.

That night, being about ten miles from our destination, we halted at eight o'clock, intending to resume the march at midnight and endeavour to pass the Hsiku Arsenal in the dark and then make a detour round the Chinese city of Tientsin to the settlement.

The outlook was a gloomy one, and seemed to most of us nearly as bad as it could be. We had heard salvoes of heavy guns all day, and for aught we knew Tientsin had already been captured, and we might still have to cut our way through to Taku and the sea. The enemy was increasing daily and was supplied with an apparently inexhaustible stock of ammunition, and with far bigger and longer ranged cannon than we had, while in front of us

lay the huge native city with its million inhabitants, besides the thirty or forty thousand trained troops that we now knew were also against us. Even the Admiral, who had been the life and soul of the expedition, and who, by his bravery, unselfishness, and courtesy, had made himself as popular with the foreigners as he already was with his own men, seemed a little despondent. We started at midnight with heavy hearts.

The first village was captured by a charge of marines in column of fours, deployment in the darkness being found too slow. Its glare, for it had caught fire, lighted up the sky and the black waters of the river, and gave a weird effect to a scene that few who saw it will ever forget. We hurried on. Half a mile further down we found ourselves in another and apparently deserted village, the narrow towing path leading between the dead walls of the houses and the high precipitous bank. Below us came the junks, slowly floating down the current, and on the opposite shore ran a long embrasured parapet, the river face of the Hsiku Arsenal.

Almost before we knew it we were abreast of it, Americans and Germans in front, British and Russians in rear. In the semi-darkness two figures could be seen advancing from the postern gate on to the glacis, dressed in the red turbans, sashes, and stockings which formed the regular Boxer uniform. But they carried no arms. They hailed us across the water: "Who are you, and whither go you?" We answered that we were foreign troops making

our way to Tientsin, and the reply came back, "It is well."

Hardly had the words sounded before the stillness was broken by a roar of musketry, and the whole line of parapet flashed into a sheet of flame. We were caught in a sort of death-trap and for an instant all was confusion. Final disaster seemed upon us, and indeed had we had trained troops against us instead of Boxers, not a man would have escaped alive. As it was, their first few volleys were luckily too high, and we were able somehow to take what cover there was, to lie down, and so to return the fire. But the junks lay below us, almost defenceless and absolutely exposed. I remember then seeing a wounded German officer emerge on to the deck of the leading barge, calmly adjust the Maxim gun that had been placed on its poop, and slewing it round, sit down behind it and begin methodically to press the button and defend his ship. He sat there all through the action under a withering fire, and was not once hit ; but I regret that I have forgotten his name.

The position however remained so critical for some time that to most of us who thought about it we seemed done for. A direct assault with our scanty numbers and with the river to cross meant annihilation, and we could only hope to take the redoubt in flank. This is what eventually was done. The British marines and a detachment of bluejackets under Major Johnstone (now Brevet Lieut.-Colonel and a C.B.), went back a quarter of

a mile up the river, bridged it with two stranded junks, and coming down along the opposite bank carried the outer wall with a rush and quickly occupied the interior. Almost at the same time the Germans at the lower corner had crossed on a raft, and now attacked the retreating Boxers as they streamed out to the south. The Admiral, the flag-lieutenant and myself had in the meantime rowed over to the postern gate in a small boat and got on to the further or land face of the redoubt. Here we found several Krupp fifteen-pounders with their ammunition boxes by them, and two of them, which had their breech blocks left in, we turned against the enemy. An attempt which was made very shortly afterwards to retake the outer angle of the work was easily repulsed by the marines. For the moment things looked more hopeful.

We now found ourselves in possession of a fortified position on the river, about five miles from Tientsin native city and eight from the settlement which lay beyond. As the men were all worn out, the list of wounded heavy, and the Chinese troops in front of us evidently both numerous and very strongly posted, it was decided to halt for twenty-four hours. In the course of the morning the whole force was ferried across, and an inner compound, which contained a storehouse and two or three huts, was converted into a *rédut* and hospital.

The general plan of the work in which we were was a rectangle, with its river and land faces each about seven hundred yards long, the cross walls

being half that length. The parapet rose some thirty feet above the glacis and had an almost perpendicular outer slope, with a broad banquette inside. The space enclosed in these forty acres, mostly overgrown with high reeds, included a large stone arsenal, containing a great quantity of cannon, rifles, ammunition, and other war material ; a number of huts within a mud wall, which formed the barrack accommodation of the ordinary Chinese garrison ; the enclosure which we had made use of for our headquarters and hospital ; a detached pavilion for the Chinese Governor, and finally a small Buddhist temple. To adequately defend such a large area was quite incompatible with our small numbers, and it was at first proposed to hold only the hospital and the stone arsenal, which together commanded the two river gates. At 3 p.m. however we were compelled to return to the outer walls, as we were attacked in great force by the troops of General Nieh's division, consisting of at least twenty camps or eight to ten thousand men, with three field batteries. It seems that the Imperial troops had previously handed over the arsenal to the Boxers, and on the latter being driven out of it by us had determined to regain the valuable position they had lost at all costs. Their attack was a most fierce one ; but after a long and weary fight, in which we lost heavily (among others the Commander of the German cruiser *Hertha*, a brave soldier who was shot dead through the heart), we were able to put this second horde to rout and to confirm our former success.

Having had no sleep for nearly forty-eight hours the men were incapable of lining the parapet all night, and accordingly the French were put into the stone arsenal, which could be closed by big iron doors and was difficult to take by assault, while the rest of the force bivouacked round the hospital, only small picquets being put out at short distances. But at 3 o'clock in the morning we were again attacked by masses of Boxers and troops combined. They had got in over the outer walls during the night and had concealed themselves in the long reeds, whence they poured volleys into us. In the action that resulted while clearing them out we again suffered considerable losses, Captain Beyts, R.M.A., being killed with several marines and bluejackets.

It was now obvious that not only would it be impossible for us to attempt to march into the settlement without reinforcements, hampered as we were by our wounded, but also that we must hold the outer lines every night. Accordingly we put the entire position into a regular state of defence. New guns were got out from the arsenal and placed on the walls, the Russians, who had run out of Berdan ammunition, were rearmed with Mannlicher carbines, and a regular day and night system of reliefs for the picquets and outposts was instituted.

At the same time we endeavoured by every means available to communicate with the Tientsin settlement, where we still hoped the garrison was holding out as an incessant cannonade was heard in that direction. We had already despatched several

Chinese messengers, but all had failed as we afterwards found out to get through, one or two of them being caught and killed by the Boxers. On the night of the 23rd a detachment of a hundred British marines tried to cut their way in with a message, but were surrounded and forced to fall back on the arsenal before they had gone a mile, so closely were we invested. The Chinese troops in Tientsin had in the meantime got their siege guns into position at the Water Fort by the city, and shelled us with great effect. One or two of their field guns we were able to knock out, but a long 4-inch, which we called the "Empress Dowager," outranged and harassed us always, as did a continual dropping fusillade from the nearer villages.

On the 24th I sent in my Chinese servant with a cipher message from the Admiral to the Consul, which he was to eat if caught. He swam the river in the early morning and went alone on his perilous way. By the exercise of considerable ingenuity and no little pluck he managed to get through in the course of the day and to perform his task, though he was first caught and interrogated by the Boxers, and again later on by the Imperial troops, both of whom he succeeded in outwitting. Arriving late in the evening in the native city, he cautiously began to inquire how the "foreign devils" were in the settlement, and was told that nearly all were dead or had fled. Gradually making his way towards it he got into a deserted zone of houses, and soon after came on the French outposts, who fired on

him mistaking him for a Boxer. By semaphoring with his arms he at last conveyed to them that he had a message, and was then escorted to the British Consulate. Here he told his story (having eaten the paper), and preparations were at once made for a force to come out and succour us. Tientsin itself had only been relieved that morning by a mixed column from Taku, and they were all as ignorant of our existence, condition and whereabouts as we were of theirs.

At the arsenal a dust-storm raged all day long, and during it we enjoyed a short respite from attack. But our spirits were not very high. Every morning hurried burials with bullets flying over the common grave; every day renewed fears for our friends in Peking and Tientsin; every night the same forlorn expectation of a returning messenger who never came. We had long ago run out of rum and had finished most of the ration beef and biscuit, but having luckily found several tons of rice in the Chinese barracks and occasionally picking up a troop horse of the Imperial cavalry that we had shot, we contrived to exist. The wounded now numbered two hundred and thirty, and we had besides sixty-four dead. These losses, with the necessary deductions for defence, reduced our effective attacking strength so much that any sortie, except for foraging purposes, was quite precluded.

But at last came the end, when we had almost given up hope.

Early one morning the welcome cap and lance of

a Cossack were despatched to the south, then a European bugle was heard, and finally on the opposite shore appeared the welcome relieving force, some eighteen hundred strong. They were chiefly Russians and British, under the command of Colonel Sherinsky, and had marched out by night under the railway embankment, guided by my servant. With the exception of a single bridge crossing they had got through without a shot fired, and so had made rapid progress. We were truly glad to see them.

With their assistance we now set about preparing litters for the wounded who had all to be carried in by road, for the river, running through the native city, was not open to us. As we could not take away the guns in the arsenal, having no horses, we rendered them useless, and sank most of the other war material in the creeks, while the ammunition boxes were stacked into great piles in the courtyard and surrounded with gunpowder.

During the night we crossed over to the opposite side, and as soon as we had started on our final march at 2 A.M. the huge mound of cartridges was fired, the explosion destroying nearly all the supplies that we were compelled to leave behind us. Our march was slow and uneventful, and as we gradually came round by the deserted railway into the suburbs that stretched outside the city, we found the houses burnt and pillaged, the station wrecked and dismantled, and everywhere blackened ruins and corpses—the smoking desolation of war.



RUSSIAN SOLDIERS WITH PRISONERS.

[Face p. 188.

At nine o'clock in the morning we re-entered Tientsin settlement, having been away in all seventeen days on fourteen of which we were fighting.

This concludes the expedition and there is little more to say, for to criticise it is neither my province nor my desire. A few personal impressions however from the international point of view, may possibly interest the reader.

I have not had occasion to write very much about the part taken by our foreign allies; this is by no means because that part was a small one. The Americans as a whole struck me as about the best practical and intelligent fighters it is possible to imagine. Their commanding officer, Captain McCalla, U.S.N., was untiring in energy and courtesy, never wanting in resource, always prepared for an emergency. Their bluejackets and marines, mostly straight from Manila, were cheerful workers, fine marchers, and excellent shots—good men all.

The Germans were rather soldiers than sailors—perfectly equipped, armed and provisioned, with their woollen sleeping-bags, their aluminium water buckets and their pith sun helmets all complete. They averaged a higher standard of height and chest measurement, and I am inclined to think of education than any of the other troops, and could work better and longer hours. Every one of their officers spoke English and French, and they had their men splendidly in hand. Everything they did they did as one would expect from the best modern

machine of the day, and their leader, Capt. von Usedom, was a tower of strength.

The Russians on the contrary carried nothing—except of course their rifles and cartridges—and appeared to want nothing. In the blazing heat they fought and marched in their thin drill forage caps, in the cold nights they slept in their white sailor clothes. For five days they lived on half a ration of biscuit and filthy river water and were never sick or sorry. For most of the expedition they were also led by a single officer, all the rest being wounded. Against Asiatics they are probably the most successful troops in the world, for they do not hesitate to apply in warfare the daring tactics and Tartar mobility of Genghis, or in pacification the “root and branch” policy and merciless justice of Cromwell.

The Japanese, though in the subsequent operations I saw a good deal of them, were not in this expedition very much to the fore owing to their small numbers. Their transport arrangements and their generally decentralised organisation struck me as excellent, and their officers were certainly better informed as to local matters than those of any other nation. The men are hard workers, always apparently in the highest of spirits, and possessed of that indifference to wounds and death and that ignorance of fear which distinguishes their congeners the Turks.

Of the British it is sufficient to say that they were British sailors, and did their work as such.

Whether it was the Admiral—the kindest, the bravest, and the most modest of chiefs—the midshipman of fourteen, doing the work of a man and cheering on his half-company with a heavy heart and an empty stomach, or the bluejacket or marine marching without boots to “save his feet,” or hastening with bullets and badinage the retreat of a military mandarin’s green chair, all were the same: they all did their duty and they never said die.

Two lessons the expedition taught. It taught the Court at Peking that even European diplomacy has a breaking strain, and that when it does break two thousand Aryans are worth a hundred thousand Chinese. It taught the British that there are people in the world called Americans and Germans who are as good as they are, and that though their race may not be on the decline, it is yet not a bad thing to set their house in order.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CAMPAIGN ON THE AMUR

WE found when we got back to Tientsin that the war, to which the so-called rebellion had rapidly grown, was hardly yet begun.

While we had been away on our unsuccessful attempt to relieve Peking the foreign settlement at Tientsin had been fiercely besieged, first by the Boxers and later by the Boxers and the Imperial troops combined. Owing to the prompt action of the Admirals commanding the united fleets at Taku the siege of the settlement had at last been raised by a flying column that had fought its way up the Pai Ho, but the position in Tientsin itself still remained very critical, while the way to Peking was now more effectually closed than it had been before.

It was also evident that the Imperial troops had settled on permanently siding with the Boxers, and from a military point of view it mattered little whether this was the outcome of orders from Peking, of local coercion, or of spontaneous desire. The net result was that we had against us the

whole population of the Chili province, and first and foremost the vast native city of Tientsin, where a million fanatical Chinese, reinforced by Boxers and foreign-drilled soldiery, were thirsting for our blood. We were fully occupied for the next three weeks in reducing this stronghold, which in addition to a warlike and confident garrison was furnished with excellent fortifications and with siege artillery of the latest type. To oppose to this the Allies had only the scanty troops that had arrived from Port Arthur and Hongkong and those they could muster from the ships, which could not of course be entirely depleted of their men. The field guns available were also of comparatively out-of-date patterns. The Russians for instance sent up a 15-pounder battery made in 1878, the French and the Japanese had only 7-pounders, and we ourselves, though we had some long 12-pounders, some 4-inch and some 4.7 guns, possessed no field artillery that was at once mobile and far-ranged.

The difficulties of a divided command had also to be taken into account, for though a willing and honest spirit of accord animated the eight nations for the most part, the numerous discrepancies of training, language and method always rendered combined action slow and uncertain.

Against us we had a hardy and arrogant foe, who believed in their leaders and their cause and who were encouraged by their recent achievements both at Peking and in the field.

So the days dragged on and it was July 14th

before we were strong enough to take the native city by assault.

During this time three principal engagements were fought, namely those that resulted in the capture of the East and the West Arsenals, and finally the storming of the *enceinte* itself.

On each occasion we suffered considerable losses. The worst part was the continual fusillade and cannonade to which we were subjected day and night from the enemy's walls and batteries, while the incessant attacks they made on our outposts and picquets, and the difficulty of keeping open our lines of communication with Taku added much to our labours.

Few people will ever know what hard and hopeless work those three weeks comprised. The casualties were far greater in proportion than those of Ladysmith, and the mental strain, remembering our feelings as regards our friends in Peking, was also excessive. Food was generally short, the insecurity of our position and the lack of sufficient troops was distressing, and the political situation remained most critical.

The attitude of Yuen-shi-kai, the Governor of Shantung, inspired us with the gravest anxiety. He possessed powerful and well-armed native levies and was himself the most influential man, outside of Peking, in Northern China. As he lay on our left flank, he could at any moment cut our lines of communication with the sea, and so isolate us.

To our right was General Sung's division at

Tongshan and Shanhaikwan, and beyond lay Manchuria, the news from which became daily worse. The Russians it seemed were being so hard pressed there that they were compelled to commence withdrawing their men from Chili, and it looked as if there was every prospect of the conflagration spreading over the whole Empire. From an international point of view the fighting and the general experience was of course highly instructive, and one learnt in a very short time more about the real merits and faults of foreign armies than the reading of books could teach in a decade. It is not however my intention to institute comparisons, which were frequently only personal, between nations who were for the time our comrades in arms.

The Chinese we also began to appreciate at their true value, and to most Europeans it then became patent for the first time that with good pay, good food and good leading they are eminently capable of being made brave and efficient soldiers. They certainly possess a feeling of patriotism or altruism that was never imputed to them before, as well as distinct physical bravery, so that if some sort of method and self-reliance were inculcated into them (a comparatively easy task) they would have the chief elemental requisites of a sound army.

On July 14th, after a two days' fight, the Allied forces were able to capture the city of Tientsin, and thus the first barrier on the road to Peking was broken down. Before however any fresh expedition could hope to start for the capital, more troops,

more transport and more supplies would have to be got together, while the route from Taku and the newly captured city itself would have to be adequately garrisoned. This was bound to take time, a month or two it was then believed at the least, and accordingly the Admiral now returned to the fleet with his staff and a large proportion of the British sailors. Personally I began to consider the possibility of getting home, as no further military operations seemed proximate.

My own original intention had been to ride across Mongolia to Kiakta and Irkutsk, and I had arranged to start from Peking in the middle of June, as the limit of my projected stay in China had been reached. This journey was now of course quite out of the question, so I had to look out for another route. As the campaign in Manchuria seemed to be just entering on a critical and interesting phase I determined to travel home by that way.

Having obtained the necessary permission from my own official superiors, I accordingly collected the few things I had in Tientsin and went down the Pai Ho in a barge to Taku. Thence I got across to Chefoo in a coolie steamer, and after some delay there I continued via Wei-hai-wei to Nagasaki in a fine Japanese transport.

On arriving at Nagasaki however I found the whole coasting service so thoroughly disorganised that I had to wait some days before I could hope to get a boat to take me up to Vladivostock, the first point on my return journey.

This time I occupied in going to Kobe through the Inland Sea of Japan, enjoying on my way the highly unpleasant ordeal of being for twelve hours in a typhoon and a French mail steamer. The Japanese, especially the country people, were not very much taken up with the war, but the state of feeling among the Chinese residents in the Hokaido was really remarkable, the general belief being that Prince Tuan, the head of the Boxer rebellion, had driven all the "foreign devils" into the sea and was shortly coming over in their fleet to take Japan.

On my return to Nagasaki I got a passage on a small boat that was going to Vladivostock, and sailing by the well-known route of Fusan and Gensan along the eastern shore of Korea, arrived at my destination after a five days' run. I had armed myself, by the telegraphic assistance of the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, with the necessary passports and posting orders, and accordingly had not very much trouble in going on by rail as far as Khabarovsk, the seat of the Governor-General of Eastern Siberia. Here however I found that all ordinary means of progress were at a standstill owing to the war. In such contingencies a Russian gentleman informed me, "*on ne voyage que par exception*," and indeed from here right on to Irkutsk every stage of my journey was achieved by means of some extraordinary or special facility, the only reasonably rapid way of travelling in Russia.

In the meanwhile I was most hospitably enter-

tained at Khabarovsk by Lieut.-General Grodekoff, who was then in supreme military and civil command, and by his courtesy I had the opportunity of seeing a good deal of the Russian soldiers who were being mobilised for the war.

The state of things in Manchuria was then (August) as follows :—The garrison at Harbin, about 2,000 strong, was closely besieged, and the Russians had been forced to evacuate Mukden, Kirin and Tsitsihar, leaving all their railway material behind. Most of the line had also been abandoned to the Boxers, who were destroying it wholesale in many places. On the northern frontier, that is to say along the River Amur, the Chinese had attacked the Siberian towns on the left-hand bank, and for nearly three weeks had bombarded the town of Blagoveschensk. This they had effectually isolated by holding the waterway above and below it, and so cutting its communications either to the east or to the west. The siege was at last raised by a small force under General Reinenkampf and the Chinese town of Aigun on the opposite shore was then taken. Two expeditions were now preparing to move down south in the direction of Tsitsihar and Harbin, one by road from Aigun and the other by river from Khabarovsk. At the same time a third column, after engaging the Chinese near Hunchun on the Korean frontier, was advancing from Vladivostock on Ninguta and Kirin. In this way General Grodekoff hoped shortly to be able to recover the whole of the railway line and to re-



A RUSSIAN GENERAL.

[Face p. 198.]

establish his strategical position in Manchuria. He was only hampered by a want of troops, and this was being made good as fast as possible by the continual despatch of reinforcements from the interior of Siberia and from European Russia.

In the south Admiral Alexieff had at last succeeded in reducing the native city of Newchwang, and had also restored the railway connection between that place and Port Arthur. He now was preparing to march north on Mukden and to join hands with General Grodekoff at the Manchurian capital. The mobilisation had worked fairly well, though the eastern provinces of Siberia had at first been in a most critical condition owing to the lack of concentration of the garrisons. At Blagoveschensk this had been so pronounced that the Governor had doubted whether he could hold the town against the enemy, and the population becoming panic-stricken had in a fit of terror or fury driven their Chinese employés across the river—where a large number lost their lives. As soon however as things had been got into shape a little the powers of organisation and discipline again reasserted themselves, and it was now only a matter of time and men to ensure the thorough defeat of the rebels and the effective occupation of Manchuria.

There was not very much enthusiasm visible amongst the Russian soldiery with regard to the campaign, though the flags and cannon taken from the Chinese were proudly paraded and the newly captured territory formally blessed and annexed.

On the other hand one could not fail to be impressed by the enormous drafts of troops that came floating along on rafts down the huge waterway of the Amur. Battalion after battalion, squadron after squadron, battery after battery, all up to full strength, all with their horses and guns, and all hardy well-grown soldiers. In two months the forces of Russia in the Far East were increased from 50,000 up to 100,000, and this without any unusual pressure being brought to bear on the reserves and without any extra acceleration of transport.

Our own progress was more or less spasmodic. Khabarovsk was of course full of many people of various nationalities desirous of going one way or another. My own companions for instance were the editor of a Russian newspaper and his wife, the inspector of an American oil company and his wife, half a dozen San Francisco engineers going to the gold mines near Kiakta, and the usual complement of Russian officers, traders, and ladies whose business or pleasure necessitated their travelling.

Naturally a very diminutive river steamboat could not accommodate all these passengers, and many were gradually left behind as we went along. For the first part of the journey from Khabarovsk to Blagoveschensk I was lucky enough to secure a bed on the steamer by means of my special orders. At Blagoveschensk, where we had to wait two days more, the Governor very kindly gave the editor and myself his own luxurious gunboat, and on this we

started, expecting to get quickly on to Stretensk where we could take the railway. But alas ! we had reckoned without our host, for hardly had the war-vessel gone a hundred miles when its engines broke down completely, and we found ourselves deserted on the desolate banks of the river, close to the borders of a hostile country and miles from any proper road.

My American friends were no longer with us, but the Russian journalist now put all the powers of the press and of the telegraph into motion, and in forty-eight hours a *deus ex machinâ* in the shape of another small steamer arrived from somewhere or other and took us on to a place called Pokrovsk, which is the junction of the Argun and Shilka rivers which there unite to form the Amur.

There was now another struggle to secure a fresh boat and places in it, as the Shilka up which we had to proceed had only about two feet of water in it and was full of sand-banks. Again the passports, the Imperial recommendations and the special permits were called into play, and again by some fortunate combination of circumstances we were enabled to get off without much delay. Our chief trouble now was getting enough to eat, for the crew of our new craft appeared to live entirely on soup unaccompanied even by bread, and after my recent starving experiences in Chili I found this a very insufficient diet. Luckily we found a shop in a little posting village where we had moored to take in wood, and here there were

sardines, jam, biscuits, and other luxuries to be bought, so that we managed to subsist in plenty until we arrived at last at Stretensk.

Here, well within Russian territory, we came to the actual terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway, and here at last we could say good-bye to China and turn our eyes away from the East to the distant West. Things seemed to be looking brighter in Manchuria, for we here got definite news of the relief of ^{the} Harbin and the arrival of the Russian troops at Kirin city. Peking had also been taken by the Allied Forces, and the situation generally had improved.

CHAPTER XV

THE RAILWAY ACROSS ASIA

So much delay had occurred along the route in consequence of the disorganised state of things resulting from the campaign in Manchuria, that it was already September by the time we got to Stretensk. From here however one could more or less reckon the days that the remainder of the journey would take, for with the single exception of the crossing of the Baikal Lake the rail from here to Moscow is continuous.

The weather remained fine and warm, though the Siberian winter which begins early and suddenly might be expected very shortly. But the autumn is certainly the best season in these parts of Asia. At sunset the colouring of the sky, reflected on the wooded uplands and the placid waters of the river, is really gorgeous. The air is soft and yet invigorating, and the intense stillness of the uninhabited forests and vast prairies through which one passes is wonderfully solemn and impressive.

The country in the Trans-Baikal province, that is to say between Stretensk and the Baikal Lake,

also comprises the finest scenery in Siberia, and though from an agricultural point of view it is not perhaps so fertile as the rolling steppes west of Irkutsk, its mineral wealth is colossal. All round Nerchinsk and Chita and in the spurs of the Altai, Yablonoi and Khingan ranges, gold, silver, platinum, lead and copper are found in rich seams. As yet the mines have been but little exploited, but when they are a most brilliant investment lies open to Russian capitalists in this new El Dorado.

Within the Chinese border the northern frontiers of Mongolia and Manchuria are hardly less plentifully supplied with ore, and the ultimate destiny of the deserts and mountains that Attila, Genghis and Timur abandoned as profitless and inhospitable wastes would surprise the shades of those avaricious conquerors. Nevertheless, though there is no doubt a splendid future for enterprise in these parts, the time cannot yet be said to have come when foreigners may hope for a fair field and no favour. Russian rules and regulations reserve all rights to a large extent to Russians, and even in those cases where other nationals are admitted, it is their money only and not their co-operation that is desired, and they enjoy little chance of independence in their efforts. This is of course the usual protectionist system and must be taken for granted.

There is still a certain amount of forced labour in the mines in these districts, though nothing compared to what there used to be, for political prisoners are now all sent to Sakhalin Island, which

lies off the North-Eastern coast of Asia opposite the mouth of the Amur. We travelled for the latter part of our long water journey in company with a battalion of infantry who had been relegated to this uncongenial task for insubordination to their officers; but it appeared that they would draw extra pay in the mines, and that the actual hours of labour would not very much exceed those of their ordinary fatigue work on the roads or on military defences in a garrison.

From Stretensk to Baikal the train takes nearly four days, though the distance is only about seven hundred miles. This service will be accelerated as the line progresses, but at that time things were in an abnormal condition owing to the continual influx of troops from the west.

The passenger trains had of course to wait for the military to pass them, and this on a single track causes considerable delay. Under the circumstances however the traffic was very well managed, and with comparatively little discomfort to civilians travelling in such a bureaucratic country as Russia. Between Stretensk and the Baikal Lake we certainly passed five or six thousand troops, and yet we came in to our destination only three or four hours late and found a steamer ready waiting for us at the pier.

Some eighty miles before we got to Chita we had passed the junction railway station for the Trans-Manchurian line. This is at a small place called Kaidalovo, whence the track to Vladivostock

and Port Arthur branches off in a south-easterly direction, and after crossing another three hundred miles of alluvial land in the basin of the Ingoda enters the Chinese dominions at Nagadan. From here it goes on to Hailar, Tsitsihar and Harbin.

The rails are now (March 1901) laid from the north as far as Hailar, and in the south from Vladivostock and from Port Arthur to Tsitsihar. All that remains to be built are the four hundred miles between Hailar and Tsitsihar and it is expected that this will be complete in two months. Details and distances are given in Appendix C.

The tribes west of the Baikal Lake are mainly Buriats, akin to the Goldis, the Fishskin Tartars and the other aboriginal races of Upper Asia. There is a scheme on foot for making some corps of irregular cavalry out of them and mounting them on the wiry little Mongolian ponies that are so successfully imported from the south. Whether it will come to anything it is hard to say, for the Buriats do not impress one as either an intelligent or a particularly courageous people. But it would save the expense and loss of time occasioned by bringing Russian horses from across the Urals, and as it was also a pet project of the late General Skobelev's, whose famous name is still one to conjure with in all military matters, it may have some results.

When we arrived at the eastern shore of the enormous inland lake, we found very luckily that it was not yet frozen over. Accordingly there was



BURIATS OF THE AMUR.

[Face p. 206.]

no need for us to be embarked in the huge ice-breaking steamer made by Armstrong's that had lately been brought out from England, and that takes whole trains on board.

The weather however was so inclement, rapidly developing into a regular storm, that we lost over twelve hours whilst waiting for it to moderate. When it at last did so we steamed across the lake, here two thousand fathoms deep, in four hours. Finding a train ready at the other side we quickly covered the remaining forty miles to Irkutsk, where we arrived early in the afternoon.

The ferry is of course only a temporary arrangement as the rails are eventually to be laid round the southern end of the lake, so as to get a through connection between St. Petersburg and Vladivostock. There is however a great deal of tunnelling and blasting and other difficult and expensive work to be done, so it may be a year or two before the loop is completed.

From Irkutsk a post train runs to Moscow every day, taking nine days over the journey. Twice a week however there is a "Siberian train de luxe," with a slightly higher fare and rate of speed. As this has a bath of sorts, a restaurant car and a library attached (besides the promise of a church and a gymnasium) it is well worth waiting for.

There is a certain amount to be seen in Irkutsk which is still the capital of Siberia, as far as that huge country can be said to have one. It is an important military and civil headquarters and also

has a considerable trade. The shops, the hotels and several of the public buildings have some pretensions to size and elegance, and as there are always plenty of people passing through from one cause or another, business prospers and prices are not quite so high as in the more isolated and distant inland towns.

The caravan route to Peking by way of Kiakta the Mongolian desert and Kalgan also starts from here (this was the road I had at first intended to return by). The Russians maintain a riding postal service over it, carried by Cossacks, that leaves once a fortnight. From Irkutsk to Peking the fastest couriers can go in about twelve days, though camels marching at an average of thirty miles a day take nearly a month. There is no trade and practically no population along the whole route, owing to the lack of water and vegetation, but physically speaking the country presents no difficulties to the construction of a railway. It seems unlikely however that this will be attempted, at any rate for a long time, in view of the excellent commercial prospects of the new Trans-Manchurian line.

During our visit to Irkutsk the Governor-General, who is the ruler of all Central Siberia, was absent on a tour of inspection in his vast dominions ; but I had interviewed so many officials, including generals, archbishops, and civil governors, on my journey though from Vladivostock that I was glad not to be obliged to trouble him.

West of Irkutsk it is not particularly necessary to

have "special orders," for here may be drawn the border line between ordinary and extraordinary Russia. Henceforward one has more or less to take one's chance of getting on just like any one else, and travelling "par exception" is limited to a few very high personages indeed.

We had no difficulty in securing our seats or rather coupés in a really excellent train, and started for our week's journey at two o'clock one afternoon in high spirits.

Our party now consisted of my two American friends, the Russian editor and his wife, the captain of a Russian battleship going home on leave, and a Russian lady from Port Arthur taking her little boy to school in St. Petersburg. Besides our own carriage there were two second class, one restaurant and one baggage car.

Our speed at first was slow, not averaging much over fourteen miles an hour, and the halts were long and frequent. But as we got on things improved. We went faster and stopped less, and once we had crossed the Urals we used often to run over thirty miles an hour. When the distance, which is over 3,000 miles, is considered this is very fair going for a trans-continental express on a newly laid single line, especially when wood has very often to be burnt instead of coal. The service was also wonderfully punctual and we were very seldom late. The food was as a rule good, the attendants civil, and the prices reasonable.

In Irkutsk I had seen my last Chinese, a rich

looking overfed sort of comprador who was driving about in a carriage, probably an agent of one of the Kiakta merchants. Henceforward it was all pure Russia and the word "Kitaiski" was hardly ever heard.

The country west of Lake Baikal is for the most part flat, treeless and to a large extent under cultivation, and is not nearly so rich in mineral wealth as Eastern Siberia. On the other hand there are several big centres of population that have sprung up in the last twenty years, during which time the agricultural interest has also made considerable progress. At Krasnoyarsk we came to the Yenisei, the longest river (3,400 miles) in Asia. It is traversed by a splendid bridge, which is a really fine and well built piece of work with six steel spans of 500 sajens, standing on six solid piers of masonry.

The next great town was Tomsk, which is situated in an isolated gold mining district of some importance. It lies sixty miles or so to the north of the main line from which a branch runs to it. Tomsk has latterly shown much power of advancement, it possesses several remarkably fine public buildings, and it is annually increasing rapidly in wealth and influence.

Between Tomsk and Omsk we crossed the Obi, and at the latter town the Irtysh, which flows on to Tobolsk. All these rivers drain into the Arctic Sea and they are of course icebound for more than half the year. From Omsk to Cheliabinsk, the



IRKUTSK.

frontier of European Russia in the Ural Mountains it is only two days' run.

All this country I had previously travelled over when returning from Kashgar and Central Asia in 1896, and I do not therefore propose endeavouring to describe it again. I saw however on every side material signs of improvement, and the people seemed much more enlightened and prosperous than they had been four years ago. In the small towns in the Urals alone quite a large trade has sprung up in the sale of ingenious little statues, made out of the black Siberian stone that is quarried in the mountains.

We passed the frontier of Europe in cold weather and were soon at Samara, where we crossed the River Volga by another fine bridge. At Tula, famous for the best steel and iron in Russia, we joined the main trunk line from Odessa and the south, and turning here due north arrived late the same evening in Moscow.

The distance from Irkutsk is just 3,400 miles, and from Vladivostock by the route we had come over 6,000 miles. Details of the actual distances, the time occupied and the prices are given in Appendix B. The latter (or railway) part of the journey was cheap, expeditious and comfortable, and all of it was highly interesting.

A very short stay in Moscow sufficed for me after a rather long absence from England, and continuing my journey by way of Warsaw and Berlin I soon got back to London.

This concludes the narrative of my eighteen months stay in the Far East. Of that time over a year was spent in China itself, and of that year more than eight months were taken up with travelling either officially or privately in various parts of the Empire.

The distance I travelled in the Chinese Empire was, as far as I can reckon, close upon 10,000 miles, which, considering the slowness of transport and the difficulty of getting about generally, represents a fair amount of labour. Whether it represents an equal amount of observation may be questioned. But China is a large country and it requires more than a year to learn very much about it that is worth telling. Indeed it is an open question whether the European has got a mind that really can understand either China or the Chinese. But still the attempt is worth making.

CHAPTER XVI

CONCLUSION

It does not enter into the scope of a book that is merely a record of travel to discuss the broad questions of politics, finance or commerce. And indeed so much has latterly been written on these subjects that there seems little call for more. I may say however that my observations have as a rule convinced me of the general accuracy of the commonplace dicta one hears nowadays about China. I mean the necessity for the development of trade, lower prices, improved communications and the like, if we wish to keep ahead of our commercial rivals ; and in the same way the urgent need of reform in the Chinese administration, army and system of learning, if that nation is to make any real progress in civilisation.

For the most part H.M. Consuls, the British missionaries and the merchants hold approximately the same views on such matters as those at home do who have taken the trouble to inform themselves about the Far East by a study of the literature bearing on it.

There are one or two facts however, not always stated in books, that the traveller, the reader or the politician may well bear in mind. They can be epitomised very shortly.

China as a country is not a homogeneous whole. The differences, for instance, geological and economic, between the north and the south are immense. The former, owing to its mountains, its loess formation, its lack of roads and similar causes, is to-day isolated, decadent, under-populated and poverty-stricken. The latter, well supplied with waterways but endowed with a less fertile soil and therefore needing more labour, has made far greater strides in advance, especially during the last century, and has now attained a considerable degree of prosperity and wealth.

In the same way the people of the north differ from those of the south, the former being indolent, apathetic and inclined to fanaticism, while the latter are energetic, intelligent and comparatively well disposed to foreigners.

There is another point. The European in considering the Chinese character should recollect that the Aryan and the Yellow races are physically and mentally distinct. What would appear truth and reason to the one often seems folly and lies to the other. Our ideas of history, of ethics, of domestic life and even our logic and system of reasoning frequently run quite counter to what the Chinaman respects and believes. And our victories do not by any means convince him that he is wrong and

that we are right. One should therefore guard against getting a wrong perspective of China and of its people by endeavouring to apply to them European standards of comparison.

Finally it should not be forgotten that the ultimate success of British trade in China depends on the efforts made by the manufacturers, and on the interest taken by the working classes at home. The British merchants or rather the commission agents out in China can create neither supply nor demand ; they are only middlemen, and can do little more than feel the pulse of the market and tell buyer and seller what the other wants. This they do at present quite as well as the representatives of any other nation, and they are in nowise to blame if our trade is not progressing in the same proportion as it used to do. It is not doing so, and we must not be imposed upon by its great volume, which is quite a different matter. The fault lies rather in England, where unfortunately few of the needs of China are studied or understood. This however will probably correct itself, for with Americans, Germans and Japanese to compete with, if not to learn from, in commerce and many other fields, we shall soon be forced to take pains and to put ourselves on a proper business footing. Neither the moral nor the material incentive is lacking, it is only that we have not yet quite got the *εὐτροπία* of the age. The danger is that when we do get it we may find ourselves a little behind in the race.

Beyond this I have nothing to say. Summarising

impressions on such vast subjects as the civilisation of China or its commercial future is of little profit, and I am debarred from giving my opinion on those matters where it might be of some value.

It has been suggested however that a short list of useful books on China might be of some value to that section of the public which, while interesting itself in Far Eastern questions, has not hitherto had the opportunity of studying them in detail.

The list here presented does not pretend to be a complete bibliography but is merely a selection of the books that I found of most help myself, and such humble criticisms as are affixed to them are of course purely personal. It is needless to say that there are many other works that I have not read that are no doubt equally excellent.

It has seemed best to make no selection from the wide range of literature bearing on Missionary enterprise, the opium trade, and the Chinese language.

LIST OF BOOKS

1. *The Middle Kingdom*, by the Rev. S. W. Williams. 1848. In 3 vols. Probably the best comprehensive account of the Eighteen Provinces.
2. *History of the Mongols*, by Sir H. Howorth, K.C.I.E. 1888. 3 vols. Mongolian and Chinese history.
3. *Letters to the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce*, by the Baron von Richthofen. 1871-2. Excellent topographical and commercial study of certain provinces.

4. *L'Empire Chinois*, by the Abbé Huc. 1851. Very interesting and realistic description of the Empire and of travelling in it.
5. *The Journeys of Marco Polo*, by Colonel Yule. The Empire of Cathay in the fifteenth century.
6. *The Land of the Llamas*, by W. W. Rockhill (U.S. Commissioner in Peking). 1897. Remarkable journey in Tibet.
7. *The Long White Mountain*, by H. James, I.C.S. 1888. Careful account of Manchuria.
8. *Journeys in Western China*, by C. Baber, late H.M. Consular Service. 1875. Szechuan and Yunnan. Good geographical information.
9. *Five Months on the Yangtze*, by Capt. Blakiston, R.A. 1862. Ascent of the Yangtze to Suifu, with thorough survey of the river.
10. *An Australian in China*, by Dr. G. Morrison (*Times* correspondent). 1895. From Shanghai to Burma—a most interesting journey.
11. *Three Years in Western China*, by Alexander Hosie, H.M. Consular Service. 1897. Travel and commerce in the West.
12. *The Blackburn Mission*, by F. S. A. Bourne, H.M. Consular Service. 1898. Commerce in the South and West.
13. *China*. "Story of the Nations" Series. By Professor R. K. Douglas, British Museum. 1900. Historical and general account.
14. *Chinese Characteristics*, by A. H. Smith. 1895. The best critical description of the Chinaman.
15. *Notes on Chinese Literature*, by A. Wylie. 1867. Full of knowledge.
16. *L'Art Chinois*. Paleologue. Paris, 1887. Good handbook.
17. *China in Decay*, by Alexis Krausse. 1900. Modern politics.
18. *China in Transformation*, by A. R. Colquhoun. 1898. Political account of the Eighteen Provinces.
19. *Problems of the Far East*, by Lord Curzon of Kedleston. 1896. Study of Eastern politics. Best description of Peking known.
20. *The Far East*, by Henry Norman, M.P. Very accurate political forecast of events. 1893.

21. *The Far Eastern Question*, by V. Chirol. 1896. Excellent epitome of the political situation.
22. *The Chino-Japanese War*, by Vladimir. 1895. Best existing account of the War.

Finally the *Annual Blue Books* on China issued by the Foreign Office. These contain the most varied, accurate and comprehensive information on the trade of the different Treaty Ports, and of the provinces immediately adjoining them. Also the *Annual Yellow Books* published by the Imperial Maritime Customs, which give all the commercial statistics of the Empire and a complete summary of its trade.

The most useful maps are—

Stanford's. 1900.

Bretschneider's, with supplements. 1896.

Waeber's (in sheets). 1893.

Posdnéef's (Manchuria). 1899.

The last three are Russian maps.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF THE CHINESE PROVINCES

Chili . . .	{ Metropolitan Province }	. . .	{ Capital, Peking. Seat of Viceroy at Tientsin.
Shantung		,,	Governor at Tsinan.
Shansi		,,	Governor at Taiyuen.
Honan		,,	Governor at Kaifong.
Kiangsu . .	{ Liangkiang Viceroyalty		
Anhui . .			
Kiangsi . .		,,	Viceroy at Nanking.
Chekiang . .	{ Minchew Viceroyalty		
Fokien . .		,,	Viceroy at Fuchow.
Kwangtung }	{ Liangkwan Viceroyalty		
Kwangsi . }		,,	Viceroy at Canton.
Hupei . .	{ Hukwang Viceroyalty		
Hunan . .		,,	Viceroy at Wuchang (Hankow).
Szechuan		,,	Viceroy at Chentu.
Kuichow . .	{ Kuyun Viceroyalty		
Yunnan . .		,,	Viceroy at Yunnan.
Shensi . .	{ Shenkan Viceroyalty		
Kansu . .		,,	Viceroy at Lanchow.
Manchuria (Manju), 3 Provinces	{ Mukden (Fengtien) Kirin Tsitsihar (Heilungkiang) }		{ Three Tartar Generals.
Mongolia (Mongu)			Amban (Resident) at Uliassutai.
Turkestan (Sinchiang)			Governor at Kuldja.
Tibet (Shidzan)			Amban (Resident) at Lhasa.

APPENDIX B

THE JOURNEY ACROSS ASIA

From.	To.	Distance in Miles.	Time in Days.	1st Class Fares.		
London <i>viâ</i> { Calais, Berlin & Warsaw }	Moscow (rail).	1,940	3	£	s.	d.
				11	0	0
Moscow (<i>viâ</i> Cheliabinsk)	Irkutsk (rail) .	3,400	8	8	12	0
Irkutsk (<i>viâ</i> Lake Baikal)	Stretensk (rail and ferry) .	780	4	2	8	0
Stretensk (<i>viâ</i> River Amur)	Blagoveschensk (boat) . . .	800	6	3	12	0
Blagoveschensk (<i>viâ</i> River Amur) . . .	Khabarovsk (boat) . . .	610	4	2	4	0
Khabarovsk	Vladivostock (rail) . . .	480	1	1	14	0
		8,010	26	£29	10	0

The time by boat is approximate only.

Notes.

On the above journey food has to be paid for extra. On the boats the price is 2 roubles (4 shillings) a day; on the trains about 3 roubles (6 shillings); west of Russia 10 shillings. This would cost an additional £7 8s. With wine and other expenses, provided that there is no delay, say £10. So that the entire journey could be done for £40.

Going east from Vladivostock to Moscow the time taken up on the river journey is about twelve days instead of ten, and the steamer connection is not so good. From St. Petersburg to Moscow, a twelve-hours' run, the distance is 400 miles and the fare £1 10 0.

From Vladivostock to Nagasaki the Nippon Yusen Kaisha runs weekly boats. Distance 850 miles, direct in three days.

Nagasaki to Shanghai 400 miles, $1\frac{1}{2}$ days.

Nagasaki to Tientsin 900 miles, 3 days direct.

Tientsin to Peking (rail) 80 miles, 3 hours.

The branch line of the Trans-Siberian Railway is to be extended from Stretensk to Pokrovsk in a few years. In the winter the river service along the Amur is entirely suspended and travellers must go by sledge; but when the railway through Manchuria is completed trains will run from Irkutsk to Vladivostock in eight, or to Peking in ten days, which should subsequently be accelerated to five and seven days. The through journey from London to Peking could then be performed under the most favourable conditions in eighteen days, while even at present it can be done in thirty-two days, which is less than the mail steamer route by India and considerably less expensive.

APPENDIX C

THE TRANS-MANCHURIAN RAILWAY

Main Line (will be completed in May).

Kaidalovo, on T. S. Ry. (about 150 miles w. of Stretensk),
to Nagadan (Chinese frontier), 280 miles. (Working.)

Nagadan to Harbin (Junction), 602 miles.

Harbin to Pograditza (Eastern Siberian frontier), 340 miles.
(Working.)

Pograditza to Vladivostock, 140 miles. (Working.)

Branch Line. (All working.)

Harbin to Newchwang, 408 miles.

Newchwang to Port Arthur, 200 miles.

Harbin to Peking (*via* Newchwang and Shanhaikwan), 880
miles.

The line south of Shanhaikwan belongs to the Imperial Chinese
Railway Company.

The part of the line completed is so shown in the map. The
total length of Russian railway in Chinese territory will now be
over 1,900 miles.

GLOSSARY OF WORDS.

(Those marked C. are Chinese ; P., Pidgun English ; R., Russian
N. or S. signifies North or South pronunciation).

Belong. (P.) To be, the irregularities of the English auxiliary
being difficult for a Chinaman to master.

Boxers. The rebels of the "Great Knife Sect," their new Chinese
name being I-Ho-Tuan. They were first called Boxers from
their drilling and gymnastics.

Boy. Head servant.

Cash. The Chinese copper coin—strings of them threaded
together in hundreds are the regular small change of the
country. Nominally 1,000 cash go to the tael, but the
exchange varies at every large city.

Chop Chop. (P.) Quick—Chinese equivalent Kwei Kwei.

Chow. (P.) Food.

Chungkwo. (C.) Chinese.

Comprador. (P.) A Chinese manager of a business.

Coolie. (C.) A porter, navvy or underservant.

Cossacks. (R.) Irregular cavalry who live under a special land
tenure.

Da (N.) or *Ta*. (S.) Great.

Daren (N.) or *Tajen*. (S.) Excellency—lit. great man.

Dollar. The Mexican or Chinese silver dollar, value 2s.—(800
cash).

Dzungduh. Viceroy (of one, two or more provinces).

Fankwei (S.) or *Fan* or *Yangkweydz* (N.) Foreign or ocean devil.
The term abusively applied to foreigners.

Fengshui. (C.) Geomancy—lit. wind and water.

Fu. (C.) The capital city of a province or prefecture, and always the residence of a Taotai at the least. Also a palace, *e.g.*, Yingkwofu = British Legation.

Futai. (C.) Governor of a province.

Gingall. The native blunderbuss, carried by three men and fired from a tripod. It is a weapon almost as dangerous to those who use it as to those against whom it is levelled.

Hai. Sea, *e.g.*, Shan-hai-kwan = mountain sea barrier.

Hei (Hey). Black, *e.g.*, Hei-lung-kiang = Black Dragon River.

Ho. (C.) River, *e.g.*, Hoang Ho = Yellow River

Hong. (C.) A guild or company.

Hsien. (C.) District town.

Hu. (C.) Lake, *e.g.*, Hunan = south of the lakes.

Huloe. (C.) A long oar, slung on a pole rowlock and used on junks.

Hun. (C.) Red.

Hwangti. (C.) The Emperor, at present H.M. Kwangsu.

Isvostchik. (R.) A cabdriver.

Jo. (C.) A subprefectural (second-class) city.

Kiang. (C.) River—pronounced “Chiang” in the South.

Kitaishi. (R.) Chinese.

Kowli. (C.) Korea (also called Siao kwo).

Kowliang. (C.) Millet.

Kowtow. (C.) To salute by kneeling down and touching the ground with the head.

Kumshaw. (C.) A gratuity : necessary word.

Kung Kuan. (C.) A Mandarin's lodging.

Kurbang. An official Korean procession either for State or religious purposes.

Kwan. (C.) Barrier—hence customs, Haikwan = Imperial Maritime Customs.

Kwang. (C.) Broad, *e.g.*, Kwangtung = Broad East.

Lao. (C.) Old.

Laoban. Skipper.

Likin. (C.) Inland Customs, a pernicious Chinese institution.

Loti Shui. (C.) The terminal tax or “octroi” levied on goods entering the gates of a Chinese city.

Maskee. (P.) Never mind—a very useful word.

Mujik. (R.) A peasant.

Nan. (C.) South.

Padarojna. (R.) A posting order.

Pai. (C.) White, *e.g.*, *Pai Ho* = White River.

Pey. (C.) North, *e.g.*, *Pey ching* = Northern Capital. (Peking.)

Ren (N.) or *Jin.* (S.) Man.

Rickshaw or *Jinrickshaw.* A hand carriage drawn by one or more coolies and universal in the Treaty Ports.

Sajen. (R.) A Russian yard.

Samovar. (R.) A tea urn.

Sampan. (C.) A small native rowboat.

Savvy. (P.) To know,—the English verb being beyond the Chinaman's conjugating powers.

Shan. (C.) Mountain, *e.g.*, *Shantung* = East of the mountains.

Si. (C.) West, *e.g.*, *Shansi* = West of the mountains.

Sin. (C.) New, *e.g.*, *Sin chiang* = New Dominion.

Sycee. (C.) Lit. fine silver. Silver in ingots or "shoes," the ordinary way money is carried in the interior.

Tael. The unit of Chinese finance. An imaginary coin varying in value, at present about 3*s.* 4*d.*

Taotai. (C.) A Chinese prefect.

Tingchai. (C.) A subordinate official in a Yamen—carries messages, does escort duty, and lives on "squeezes." Also called a "Yamen Runner."

Tung. (C.) East.

Uluss. (C.) Russian.

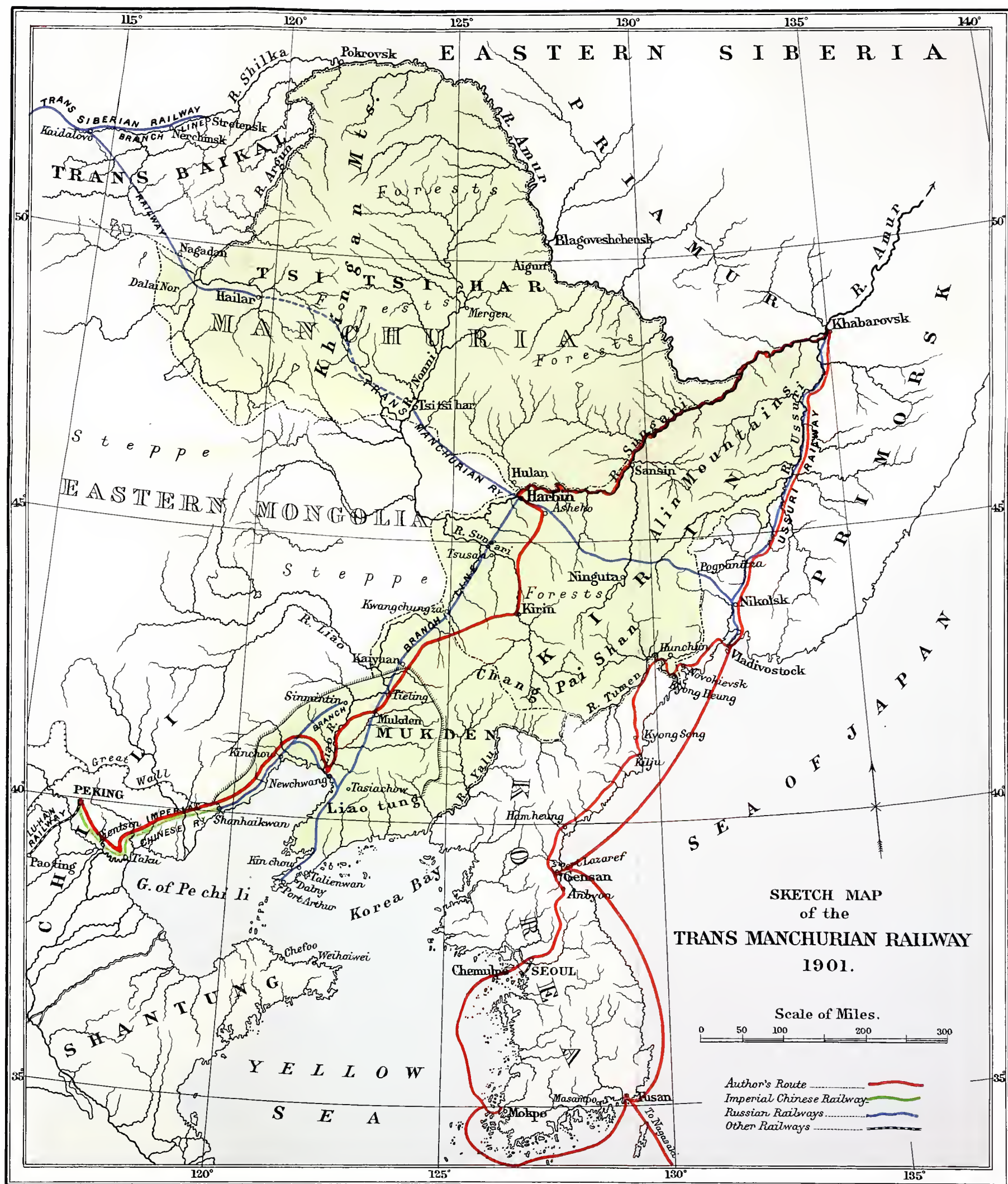
Yamen. (C.) An official residence.

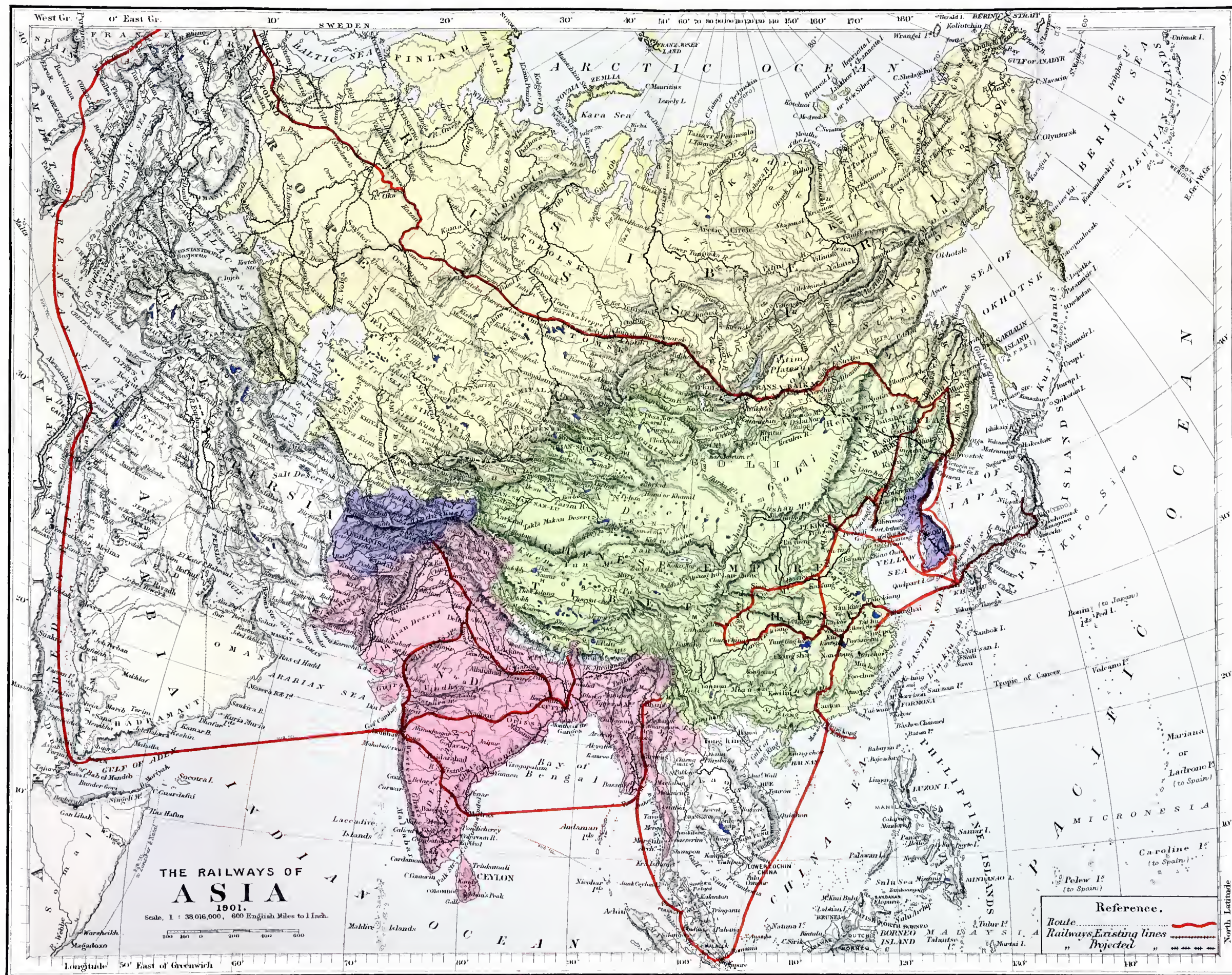
Yangbang. A Korean landed magnate.

Yapon. (C.) Japan.

Yen. The Japanese silver dollar (two shillings in value).

Yingkwo. (C.) English.





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